

A Study of the Role Learning and Socialization during the Transition from Teacher to
Elementary School Administrator

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Abstract

This thesis examined the role transition from an elementary teacher to an elementary principal. In particular, the training and socialization process of becoming an elementary principal was explored through the study of the hierarchical and political structure of a southern Ontario school board, and how this influenced the learning experiences of new elementary principals. A qualitative methodology, with a grounded theory design, was employed to investigate this process through interviews with 10 participants to examine their experiences and role learning occurs during their development. Specifically, participants perspective shifts, developmental experiences, understanding of group culture, and expansion of a board profile were highlighted in the data.

One of the compelling results of the study was the degree to which principals of aspiring administrators influence the socialization of their subordinates. The beliefs and practices of the school principal determine the socialization orientation that teachers and vice-principals will experience during role learning. The results of this study also imply that role orientation needs to be understood as a continuum between custodial and innovative role assumption. Varying degrees of custodianship or innovation depended on the context of the administrative placement and the personal attributes of administrative candidates. Principals who are willing to share responsibilities, who are good communicators, and who wish to develop a collaborative relationship with their vice-principals are the individuals the participants in this study described as making the best mentors.

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CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM

This thesis examined the experiences of individuals during their role transition from an elementary school teacher to an elementary school principal. In particular, the socialization process of becoming an elementary school principal was explored through the study of the hierarchical and political structure of a southern Ontario school board, and how this influenced the learning experiences of new elementary school principals. The indoctrination of administrators (Durkheim, 1977) was a complex phenomenon to study since participants' experiences varied significantly during their development of the necessary skills, attitudes, and beliefs of the administrative group.

Extensive research outside of the discipline of education has been done on the socialization of individuals to new roles. These studies have taken on a variety of approaches to explore the indoctrination processes of organizations. Some studies have looked at the structure of the organization (Kanter, 1976; Van Vianen & Agneton, 2002), the nature of the training experiences (Griffin, Colella, & Goparaju, 2000), the influence of informal and formal mentors (Allen, McManus, & Russell, 1999), and how organizational politics can influence role learning (Prentice, 1961; Zaleznik, 1970). Both Van Maanen and Schein (1979), and Jones (1986) have presented frameworks to study the socialization along functional, inclusionary, and hierarchical boundary passages. However, the majority of these studies have focussed on newcomers to an organization and few of them have studied vertical movements within the same organization.

The process of administrative socialization and training has not been thoroughly studied. Within the field of education most of the research has studied only specific parts of the socialization process of becoming an administrator. Several studies have examined

the perspective changes as an administrator (Cline & Necochea, 2000), the technical and social skills developed by new administrators (Hartzell, Williams, & Nelson, 1995), and the struggles of vice-principals (Daresh, 1987). Greenfield (1985) conducted the most thorough study of socialization using Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) framework, but his research focussed more on personality, and has not been verified within the Canadian educational context.

Research does demonstrate a socialization interaction between the organisational strategies and the individual strategies employed by new administrators. As boards of education experience the need to hire new administrators there is a need created for renewal through recruiting, training, and socializing of qualified individuals to new positions. However, an interesting interaction occurs between the individual in a new position and the structure of the organization. On one hand, Cline and Necochea (2000) have shown that there is a reliance on socialization to mould employees to the structures, norms, values, and beliefs of the organization to ensure the stability and success of the organization. But on the other hand, Appelbaum and Hughes (1998) have found that individuals hired to new positions use their own social skills to learn, manipulate, and exploit the social dynamics of the workplace for their own benefit. Both of these two approaches show a complex interaction between the organization and the individual during the socialization to a new position. Unfortunately, this process has not been studied indepth in relation to promotions within a school board.

The training methods used to assist new school administrators during their role socialization are not thoroughly researched in the current literature base. Therefore, this

thesis was conducted to develop a better understanding of the training and socialization individuals experienced during their progression from a teacher to an elementary school principal.

Background of the Problem

During the late 1980s and early 1990s a limited turnover in elementary school principals in Ontario school boards made the task of administrative selection and training less onerous. This era saw few teachers being appointed to new administrative positions, and created an environment where there was little need for a well developed formalized training program geared to quickly training new administrators. During this time period school boards experienced an abundance of applicants for administrative positions, and senior administrators were able to scrutinize candidate selection carefully. Several studies during this period (Greenfield, 1975; Macmillian, 1994) have reported that administrators expressed displeasure that the selection process was secretive, and the criteria used for selection were poorly defined for applicants. Often unsuccessful applicants were left wondering why they did not succeed.

Individuals who were promoted to vice-principal frequently spent several years in that role before their subsequent appointment as a principal. It was commonplace for individuals to remain in the transient position of the vice-principal for more than 5 years, and they often had to apply repeatedly before successfully being promoted and extended the transition from teacher to principal. Along with this came numerous in-context experiences with a variety of different learning opportunities for individuals to master their administrative role. Training programs primarily consisted of an apprenticeship

under the guidance of their principals. For Jones (1986), this method of training used by boards of education was a perfect example of an *individualized training program* consisting of unclear training time lines, no formally set training criteria, and guidance provided by an experienced member of the organization.

The context of administrator socialization drastically changed in the late 1990s as the province of Ontario started to experience a significant number of elementary school principal retirements. Many of the province's experienced elementary school principals chose to retire as the retirement factor to qualify for pension was reduced to 85, and significant changes were introduced to the educational system, such as the removal of principals from the Teachers' Federation. In a very short span of time boards of education in Ontario had to drastically increase the number of individuals appointed to administrative positions, and the training time individuals received before being appointed to a principalship has been drastically reduced.

The Ontario Principals' Council was concerned about the present context in education and commissioned a study of the demographic profile of current Ontario administrators regarding their retirement intentions over the next decade. Through surveys of administrators, Williams (2001) believes this bulge in administrative retirements will continue until 2009. Williams reports that 46.9% of administrators expect to retire by 2005, and 70.4% of administrators expect to retire by 2009. He also states the demographics of teachers holding principal's qualifications are similar with 49% of qualified teachers planning to retire by 2005, and 72.4% of qualified teachers planning to retire by 2009. These statistics highlight the dramatic turnover in

administrators that will occur in this decade, and the fact there will be a significant shortage of administrative candidates in the province of Ontario.

Boards of education are presently struggling to deal with the number of administrative positions needing to be filled each school year. For example, during the past 5 years boards of education have dealt with a shortage of qualified candidates for administrative positions, and have had to rely on temporary Letters of Approval from the Ontario College of Teachers to fill vacant administrative positions with teachers lacking the necessary qualifications. According to Williams (2001), in the 1998-1999 school year 88 temporary Letters of Approval were written for boards of education, and by the 2000-2001 school year there was a dramatic increase to 198 Temporary Letters of Approval. There is a growing shortage of qualified administrative candidates within Ontario as Williams (2001) explains:

The current number of persons obtaining principal's qualifications annually will not be sufficient to ensure adequate pools of applicants for the positions that will become vacant in the rest of this decade. The growing numbers of temporary Letters of Approval already indicate this dilemma. (p. 51)

Along with a shortage of qualified individuals comes several challenges. Boards have had to actively encourage teachers to pursue administrative positions, provide leadership development opportunities, and identify those individuals who have the desired administrative qualities. An interesting point, aside from the focus of this thesis, involves the practice of *recruitment into administration* which raises several ethical questions of who gets encouraged.

The southern Ontario school board being studied in this thesis is similar to many boards in this province that are experiencing large numbers of elementary school principal retirements. This southern Ontario board has approximately 100 elementary schools, of which 30 elementary schools have vice-principals. Using the statistics from William's (2001) survey, this board can anticipate approximately 25 to 30 principals and 4 to 7 vice-principals retiring over the next 4 years. The current context means that teachers entering administration will spend 3 or 4 years as a vice-principal before receiving a principalship.

The present situation within education has drastically reduced the transition time for teachers to assume the role of principal than was experienced a decade ago. Consequently, new administrators will have fewer experiences to help them develop an administrative perspective and to learn their new role before assuming an elementary school principalship. The goal of this study was to examine the current role learning experiences, or socialization, of new administrators to better understand this process, and to recommend how to improve the training practices for administrators.

Statement of the Problem Situation

The socialization and training process of elementary administrators is a poorly understood phenomenon. Current research lacks a clear explanation of how training programs, organizational culture, the nature of the administrative role, and the strategies individuals use during role learning combine to indoctrinate teachers into the administrative cadre. Both boards of education and aspiring administrators need to better understand the process of role socialization within the present educational context.

Boards of education need research to guide the development of training programs to assist candidates to learn their new administrative role. Presently boards are under tremendous pressure with the shortage of qualified individuals applying to administrative position. Across this province, boards cannot afford to have new administrators struggle unnecessarily or fail to learn the duties of the new positions. Each training failure places further stress on a system that is already under considerable pressure. By better understanding the administrative socialization and training process, boards will have the ability to create systems that facilitate more effective role learning for new administrators.

Additionally, teachers showing interest in pursuing an elementary school principalship lack a clear understanding of the socialization and training process they will experience. This thesis was conducted to also articulate to aspiring administrators how the social and political dynamics of the local board's administrative group influences an individual's role learning, and how this ultimately decides who will be promoted. Aspiring administrators need to have an increased awareness of the learning experiences they are entering into so that they can proactively influence the direction of their own development.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate the socialization and training individuals experience during their transition from a teacher to an elementary school principal. To study this process the following empirical questions were posed:

1. How does an individual's perspective change during the transition from a teacher to an elementary school principal?
2. What organizational training strategies are employed by the board of

education to assist the role learning of administrative candidates?

3. What individual training strategies do administrative candidates use to help themselves learn their new role?
4. How does the culture of the administrative group affect the socialization and training of administrator candidates?
5. How do individuals develop their profile within the board before applying to an administrative position?

These questions were used to develop a better understanding of the role learning individuals experienced during their transition to an elementary school principal.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This thesis was intentionally designed to explore the perceptions of individuals holding different vantage points of the socialization process of becoming an elementary school principal. As Smircich (1983) argues, “the analysis of an organization as a culture is an interpretive endeavour... and aims to learn the meaning of actions and events for the organization members, and to portray these accurately” (p. 164). Because an organizational culture is difficult to be understood from the perspectives of only one or two members, a sample of 10 participants was selected to provide sufficient viewpoints that would more accurately characterize the administrative experience. New administrators were interviewed to gain their perspective of the current practices used by their board of education. Experienced principals were interviewed to provide their perspective of the similarities and differences between the current socialization process administrators experience compared to administrators a decade ago. The third perspective

was provided by one of the board's superintendent of schools. The dialogue that occurred with members holding varying positions within the administrative group allowed me to explore the sense-making processes that occur (Smircich, 1983).

The scope of this thesis examined the nature of the socialization process that individuals experienced during the transition from an elementary school teacher to an elementary school principal. A broad view of the content, context, and social learning experiences were explored to yield a holistic view of each individual's administrative role learning within one school board. This thesis is limited to the nature of the socialization experience of administrators, and no cause-and-effect relationships can be drawn (Smircich, 1983). This is also not an exhaustive investigation of all socialization nuances that occur within the administrative group. The findings are limited to factors verified by multiple participants.

Outline of Remainder of the Document

Chapter Two presents the current research on the socialization of individuals during transitions to new positions within an organization. This research focuses on four main factors during role learning: a shift in perspective, the use of development strategies by both the board and the individual, the learning of the cultural world of administration, and the expansion of an organizational profile to successfully achieve a promotion. The effectiveness of individuals to negotiate the cultural landscape of their new administrative role contributes to the perceived worth other members of the organization will hold of that individual. However, few studies have been conducted to investigate the factors that influence the nature of the socialization within educational administration directly.

Chapter Three examines the qualitative methodology used to investigate the process of socialization participants experienced during the transition from teachers to elementary school principals. Within this chapter the participant selection criteria are rationalized; how the semistructured interview questions were designed is discussed; and the assumptions, limitations, and ethical considerations for this thesis are presented.

Chapter Four presents the analysis of the interview transcripts on the socialization process the participants experienced. The four themes that emerged through the analysis were a shift in perspective, the use of development strategies, acquisition of the administrative cultural rules, and the actions needed for participants to expand their organizational profile.

Chapter Five provides a summative analysis of this thesis. Within this section is a brief review of the research, a discussion of the findings, and recommendations for practice and further research.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A broad review of the literature was conducted for this thesis spanning several major disciplines from sociology to psychology, education to labour studies. What is presented here is an overview of the major issues related to the socialization and training of individuals to assume new positions within an organization. The literature found within the field of education was limited in its critical analysis of socialization, and no formal models were presented to understand this process.

As aspiring teachers pursue a principalship there are four significant socialization forces that these individuals experience. The four socialization forces involve a perspective change, developmental experiences, cultural dynamics of the new role, and active profile development that all influence role learning. Extensive research has been conducted on these four socialization forces in a wide variety of organizational contexts.

Perspective Shift

The transition from an elementary school teacher to an elementary school principal is associated with a change in an individual's perspective. Bennis (1994) describes perspective as "no more and no less than how you see things, your particular frame of reference. Without it, you're flying blind. But it's also your point of view" (p. 121). Perspectives are not constant within individuals and change over time (Greenfield, 1985; Louis, 2001; Saks & Ashforth, 1997). Individuals that are entering new roles often encounter role conflicts, surprises, and isolation.

As teachers move into the administrative world they are confronted with issues that challenge their thinking and result in role conflict. Ashforth and Saks (1996) studied the transition of graduate students into a variety of corporations and found that "the often

depending nature of socialization may lead the newcomer to adopt different perspectives” (p. 258) to resolve the role conflicts experienced in the first few months in their new positions. Similarly Hartzell, Williams, and Nelson (1994) have found that “new assistant principals experience high levels of role conflicts as they attempt to re-calibrate their thinking from teaching to administrative perspectives” (p. 25). Through assuming a new role as administrators, individuals adopt a new professional identity (Louis, 2001). Hartzell, Williams, and Nelson (1994) and Macmillian (1994) have both shown that successful role learning involves a change in an individual’s perception to reflect the values and the perspectives of the new cultural group.

Another significant aspect of an individual’s shift in perspective during the transition to a new organizational role results from the surprises individuals experience. Louis (2001) describes numerous studies that have examined the influence of “surprise, which represents a difference between an individual’s anticipations and subsequent experiences in the new setting” (p. 379). Hartzell, Williams, and Nelson (1994) report that new administrators also experience a great deal of surprise in their new role. Even though teachers have spent years in the educational system close to administrative decisions, “few ever really get a close look at it in operation. When teachers move into the office, a whole new dimension of school operation opens to them, and its breadth, depth, and intensity are frequently surprising” (p. 7). New administrators, Greenfield (1985) explains, continue to adapt and adjust to their new roles as their “administrative perspectives became more and more full to the extent that they became exposed to work–world pressures similar to those of administrators” (p. 24). Daresh (1987) is very

critical of administrative training practices, and contends it is “not generally sufficient in their ability to enable people to experience the world of administration before they take their first job” (p. 14).

Individuals experience perspective changes as a result of a discontinuity between held views and daily interactions. As teachers move from the classroom to the office many of their duties are discontinued and new duties are assumed (Hartzell, Williams, & Nelson, 1994). This often results in a contrast between an individual’s old role and their new role (Louis, 2001) causing their perspectives to “evolve in response to the organizational pressures that characterize the work–worlds of role incumbents” (Greenfield, 1985, p. 7). Louis explains that individuals participate in “retrospective explanations to help resolve tension states by restoring equilibrium” (p. 381). This adaptation to a new role causes administrators to develop political perspectives through their experiences during task completion, risk taking, and moral dilemmas (Blase, 1995).

The last shift in perspective individuals experience, once prompted into a leadership position above their peers, is a sense of isolation. Whyte (1956) elaborately describes the process individuals go through during their development as an executive. There comes a point in the rising executive’s career where “in the midst of the crowd at the office he will be isolated – no longer intimate with the people he has passed but not yet accepted by the elders he has joined” (p. 158). Within the educational research literature several researchers have asserted new administrators experience a change in their relationships with teacher colleagues (Daresh, 1987; Greenfield, 1975; Macmillian, 1994). Hartzell, Williams, and Nelson (1994) have found new administrators “lose the

support system of teaching colleagues... They are treated differently and do not any longer enjoy peer relationships with their former teacher colleagues” (p. 29). New administrators come to the realization that they are now a part of a different social group, and with this their interactions with members of the school community change.

Development Strategies

Organizations use developmental strategies to socialize members to specific roles so individuals have the knowledge of the role, and understand the acceptable modes of communication of their new position. Providing growth and development opportunities is, for Bennis (1994), a responsibility of organizations since it expands the potential of all members toward leadership. In their research, Saks and Ashforth (1997) have found that these initial experiences an individual is provided can establish “a ‘career success cycle’, wherein socialization practices impart the necessary confidence, knowledge, and credibility for the newcomer to perform effectively, thus reinforcing these attributes and increasing the likelihood of future success” (p. 262). Training experiences provided by established members of an organization also represent socialization practices that foster the growing acceptance of an individual’s new cultural position by adopting new sense-making schemas (Louis, 2001).

The training of new administrators in education follows a similar path. A variety of skill – specific and process – oriented strategies are delivered to new administrators, and Daresh (1987) states that this method of socialization is designed to develop within them the image of a principal. Similarly, Hart and Weindling (1996) found that the “more carefully designed, integrated programs that maximize formal learning and in – context

growth and development hold the greatest promise for the preparation of new school leaders” (p. 331). Oftentimes, however, according to Cline and Necochea (2000), the socialization of new administrators fosters the development of a custodial orientation toward their new role.

Organizational Development Strategies

During the review of the literature no studies were found within the educational research that characterized the specific training experiences new administrators received from their boards of education. As a result, the field of organizational socialization was researched and led to a significant body of research. These studies characterize the various types of techniques organizations use to facilitate role learning within employees.

Formal Organizational Training

The goal of all training programs in organizations is to socialize new employees to the functional, inclusionary, and heirarchical boundaries and cultural beliefs of the organization. This is accomplished through the use of various socialization tactics. Van Maanen and Schein’s (1979) socialization model define tactics as “the ways in which the experiences of individuals in transition from one role to another are structured for them by others in the organization” (p. 231). The way in which employees are socialized to new roles is significantly influenced by the artifacts, values, and assumptions of the organization (Schein, 1991).

Van Maanen and Schein’s model (1979) identifies six tactics of socialization used in organizations. The first tactic, collective versus individual, deals with the size of group being trained. A collective tactic trains individuals in large numbers usually in a school

type setting, and an individual tactic is training in isolation from other employees going through a similar process. The second tactic, formal versus informal, considers the degree of structure an organization uses during the training of employees. The third tactic, sequential versus variable (random), determines the degree of clarity given to the specific steps to be taken to achieve successful role learning. A sequential process outlines for individuals required steps, whereas a variable process has many ambiguous steps. The fourth tactic, fixed versus variable (timelines), refers to the extent individuals know the timelines involved in the training program before successful completion. The fifth tactic, serial versus disjunctive, is the extent to which mentorships are available. In a serial process trainees have role models to assist their learning, but in a disjunctive process no role models are available to assist in role learning. The sixth tactic, investiture versus divestiture, either validates or rejects the personal qualities of the individual being trained respectively. Greenfield (1985) concluded “the transition from teaching to administration are characterized as individual, informal, random, variable, serial, involving both disvestiture and investiture processes” (p. 9).

Jones (1986) proposes a modified model of Van Maanen and Schein’s six socialization tactics used in organizations to train employees to specific roles. In Jones’ model the six socialization tactics are grouped into three categories: context (collective & formal vs individual & informal), content (sequential & fixed vs random & variable), and social (serial & investiture vs disjunctive & disvestiture). Depending on the socialization tactics used in the organization an institutionalised or an individual oriented training program will result.

Organizations with an institutionalised socialization orientation have clearly defined and communicated training programs. The context of socialization is collective through recruits attending formal courses that build “a collective sense of identity, solidarity, and loyalty within the cohort group being socialized” (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 235), along with the accepted attitudes, values, and conduct associated with the new position. An example of this is basic training in the military. The content of role learning is developed through a sequential set of identifiable steps and experiences. Candidates are well aware of the time requirements of the steps needed for passage into the new role. As well, the social tactics of institutionalised socialization involves both a serial process, and investiture through mentorship programs provided by established members of the organization. Using Jones’ model, Ashforth and Saks (1996) found that “the more institutionalized the socialization tactics, the more a coherent sense will be conveyed of what the organization purportedly represents and how one should construe events and meaning” (p. 176), which produced lower stress levels and greater role identification. Similarly, McCauley (2001) comments that

formal developmental experiences focus managers specifically on a learning and development agenda. There is value in stepping out of the day – to – day work and having time to be exposed to new knowledge, examine issues more deeply, reflect, share with fellow managers, listen to feedback, and practice new skills in a safe environment. (p. 356)

The ultimate goal of the institutionalized approach is to accept and reinforce the personal qualities of the individual, and to reduce the amount of role strain, anxiety, and job

dissatisfaction of newcomers to a role (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Jones, 1986).

Organizations with an individualized socialization orientation do not develop specific formal training programs for individuals. Instead, the newcomer's context of socialization occurs through completing the duties of the role by trial and error and by being placed as an apprentice to a senior employee. This type of contextual orientation is employed "when a collective identity among recruits is viewed as less important than the recruit's learning of the operational specifics of the given role" (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 234). The content of role learning is random, having no structure for the individual to follow. The required skills needed to achieve boundary passage are often unclear, and are learned by chance. Also, timelines vary for each individual, which leads to role ambiguity and which fosters uncertainty for the correct course of action to successfully achieve boundary passage. Lastly, disjunctive processes and divestiture are the social aspects found in this orientation. Candidates who find no mentors available must define the role for themselves. Jones (1986) reports this often causes greater divestiture through negative feedback concerning performance and is used as a tactic "to mould newcomers into forms that the organizations wish" (p. 265).

In a study of the effects of socialization tactics on the adjustment of newcomers to an organization, Ashforth and Saks (1996) have found that institutionalised tactics are positively linked to job satisfaction but negatively related to role conflict and ambiguity. They also discovered that this orientation led to newcomers taking on custodial roles that accepted the values and assumptions of the organization while maintaining the cultural artifacts or practices of the position. By contrast, individualized tactics were found to

promote role conflict, ambiguity, and job dissatisfaction. This orientation fostered role innovation within newcomers to define their own values and assumptions, which led to the creation of new artifacts or practices for the position.

The body of research literature communicates the need for a well developed formalized training program. Effective formal training programs focus on consistent and intentional implementation to provide the necessary framework for leadership development (Day, 2001; McCauley, 2001). Day argues that “leadership development is enhanced when assignments are matched with individuals’ developmental needs” (p. 598). Similarly, within the field of education, Greenfield (1975) cites the need for formal training programs to “focus on the development of technical skills among individuals who have already demonstrated that they possess the social skills for working with adults in a complex organization” (p. 21). A common complaint Daresh (1987) found is that new administrators “often indicate that they need more information about law, school finance and business management, teacher evaluation procedures, computer technology and its application to education, and numerous other similar issues that are related to daily, practical concerns” (p. 18). Overwhelmingly the research indicates that the formal training programs developed within organizations must be intentionally designed to address the needs of developing leaders.

Informal Organizational Training

Regardless of the socialization orientation used within an organization, such as a board of education, individuals new to a role will experience informal learning opportunities. Individuals pursuing an elementary school principalship must first hold the

transitory position of an elementary school vice-principal. The hierarchical structure of administration creates a formal structure within the school setting where the principal is the superior and the vice-principal is the subordinate (Prentice, 1961). However, the type of relationship the principal and vice-principal develop sets the stage for the informal training opportunities.

The relationship that is established within the administrative team creates the working context for the vice-principal's role learning. Greenfield (1985) has found that "context is a critical determinant" (p. 3) in the informal learning and the success that an individual experiences during the transition to administration. For this reason many principals develop a mentoring relationship with their vice-principals. A close working relationship in the administrative team is critical for vice-principals since, as Johnson and Ridley (2004) state, "mentors bolster a protege's [sic] technical competence by providing knowledge and refining specific professional skills" (p.14). Prentice (1961) also stresses the active participation of the superior is needed since "no genuine growth of an employee will occur without some teaching. The superior must from time to time take cognizance of the successes and failures and make sure that the subordinate sees them and their consequences as he does" (p. 147). Finally, Louis (2001) reports that "'in-response' socialization practices facilitate sense making and adaptation far more effectively than 'in-advance' practices" (p. 385), and regular feedback from supervisors leads to a "reduction in stress-producing uncertainty of 'not knowing what you are doing'" (p. 387). The administrative team's relationship will significantly determine whether the socialization outcomes are either innovative or custodial role development

(Greenfield, 1985).

Aspiring administrators develop a variety of informal mentorship relationships with other members of the organization in addition to the mentorship provided by their direct superior. Often, says Day (2001), “informal, unplanned mentoring is usually encouraged by an organization, but not initiated or administered by it” (p. 593). This is similar to how junior executives of an organization will develop informal relationships with senior executives (Kanter, 1976). Within education aspiring administrators will develop mentoring relationships with other senior principals and superintendents who will provide guidance during an individual’s development. However, no research within education has reported this finding.

McManus and Russell (1999) characterized both formal and informal types of mentoring relationships. Formal mentoring provides psychosocial functions (role modelling, friendship, acceptance), helps to improve work performance, and is developed through assigned positions within an organization. Informal mentoring provides career-related functions (sponsorship, coaching, visibility), provides learning of conflict resolution and interpersonal skills, and evolves through mutual attraction. Through interviewing many effective mentors Johnson and Ridley (2004) conclude that the main difference is that these individuals “understand that learning is a catalyst to growth... [and provide] advice, recount relevant experiences, and provide consultation on challenges that lie ahead” (p. 14). Their emotional warmth is important in the mentorship relationship since it provides a friendly and approachable disposition toward the protégé (Johnson & Ridley, 2004).

Not all superior–subordinate relationships are positive. There are times in all organizations where superiors lack the skill, knowledge, and/or tact necessary to develop careers of subordinates. However, Johnson and Ridley (2004) have found that “holding positional authority or supervisory status in an organization is often equated with competence to lead, supervise, and mentor” (p. 95). Vice–principals who find themselves in an administrative pairing with an ineffective partner often struggle (Greenfield, 1975). Hartzell, Williams, and Nelson (1995) have found that vice–principals who “perceive the principal as an adversary will behave differently than if [they] perceive the principal as a potential partner” (p. 4). Bennis (1994) believes that even negative situations can be turned into positive experiences since “bad bosses teach you what not to do” (p. 149).

Individual Development Strategies

During role learning individuals are proactive openly developing the skills, attitudes, and beliefs presented to them during the training provided within the organization. Role incumbents actively participate in their own development through intentionally interpreting, judging, and responding to their new work environment through the use of their own socialization strategies (Griffin, Colella, & Goparaju, 2000). The three individual strategies of self–improvement, relationship building, and networking are of prime importance in this thesis.

Self–Improvement

Individuals who are successful at achieving promotions within an organization often set a course of self–improvement to recognize areas of growth that are necessary (Bennis, 1994; Cohen, 2000; Kanter, 1976). Saks and Ashforth (1997) found that “the use

of socialization tactics sets the stage for information acquisition” (p. 248), and was “positively related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and task mastery and negatively related to anxiety” (p. 249). There are also personality characteristics within individuals, as found in McCauley’s (2001) study, such as a strong internal locus of control or a belief in one’s own abilities that influences individuals to actively participate in their own role learning. Similarly, Greenfield (1985) found that administrators with a high internal motivation were much more likely to participate in self-improvement strategies than those administrators with a low internal motivation.

The core of all self-improvement is the ability to self-reflect and analyze missing skills, knowledge, and the consequences of actions. Through this process aspiring leaders develop strategies to increase their human capital; to develop their knowledge, skills, and abilities (Day, 2001). Learning from oneself is limitless. Bennis (1994) strongly advocates the use of the reflective process:

There are lessons in everything, and if you are fully deployed, you will learn most of them. Experiences aren’t truly yours until you think about them, analyse them, examine them, and finally understand them. The point, again, is to use your experiences rather than being used by them, to be the designer, not the design, so that experiences empower rather than imprison. (p. 98)

Effective role-learning involves the active participation of the role incumbent. This can only be achieved through identifying personal weaknesses and setting a course to improve. This is especially important for new administrators to understand because to lead means to take action and learn from mistakes. Cohen (2000) puts self-improvement

into perspective: “Make mistakes and adjust your procedures. Take your lumps and improve, for the art of the leader is action oriented” (p. 296).

Relationship Building

Both in the field of education and outside of the field much has been written about the necessity of developing effective working relationships with members of one’s work group. Individuals entering the administrative world often find it difficult to maintain positive relationships with their former colleagues (Daresh, 1987; Greenfield, 1975; Macmillian, 1994; Whyte, 1956). A commonality among successful new school leaders is the ability to use their interpersonal intelligence to build trust, respect, and commitment with others (Gardner, 1993). Brass (2001) explains that this allows “effective leaders to become human resource brokers, bringing together the right mix of people and technology to offer a product or service successfully” (p. 143). Similarly, Blase (1995) states that effective administrators develop associative (cooperative, supportive, trusting) political relationships whereas ineffective administrators develop dissociative (uncooperative, nonsupportive) political interactions. At the core of this body of research is the ideal that “leaders deal with people; not things, leadership without values, commitment, and conviction can only be inhumane and harmful” (Bennis, 1994; p. 45).

Nature of Leadership

The attributes of individuals influence the nature of their leadership style, which in turn will affect the type of individual socialization tactics they use to learn new roles. At the same time the ethical stance on which individuals base organizational behaviour will greatly affect their ability to develop influence and power within a given position.

Kanungo (2000) refers to two types of leadership styles as transactional and transformational. These two perspectives are helpful in understanding why some individuals are more effective at role learning than others.

According to Kanungo, transactional leaders follow a teleological perspective. Their ethics of leadership stem from the utilitarian concept of the greatest good for the greatest number of people (Rebore, 2001). Deal and Peterson (1994) contend that this orientation embodies the image of the manager “defining goals, creating policies, allocating responsibility, delegating authority” (p. 4), along with other tasks to ensure tasks run smoothly. For Blase (1995), transactional individuals are ineffective leaders when their style is reactive in nature, they employ sanctions and harassment, and they control access to information. Similarly, Kanungo stipulates that this orientation possesses hedonistic characteristics, resulting in his belief that “transactional leadership is not moral in that it is self-absorbing and manipulative” (p. 258). He contends that these individuals will also try to influence colleagues and superiors by using gifts and compliments to promote self-development. Thus, individuals with this leadership style might be expected to have a high Machiavellian personality.

Transformational leadership, by contrast, embodies the deontological perspective, which Rebore (2001) defines as an approach “concerned with the rightness or wrongness of a given action” (p. 6). Candidates with this moral stance use “influence strategies and techniques that empower the followers, enhance their self-efficacy and change their values, norms, and attitudes consistent with the vision developed by the leader” (Kanungo, 2000, p. 257). Such individuals have an altruistic outlook and place great

emphasis on the growth needs of all individuals within the organization. Blase (1995) concluded that individuals with this open style employ diplomacy, conformity, and compromise to achieve specific goals. Consequently, during role learning these individuals can be expected to employ individual socialization tactics that are consistent with their own moral stance.

Cline and Necochea (2000) conducted an interesting study on the type of leadership styles that succeed in educational administration. They found that individuals who display a transactional style of leadership appear to excel in educational administration since most boards of education use an institutionalised training program. Cline and Necochea (2000) point out that “the socialization process for school administrators seems to perpetuate the status quo by rewarding conformity, stability and complacency, rather than transformational leadership” (p. 152). Yet, these authors argue that “an administrative induction programme needs to be created that focuses on helping maverick leaders acquire the norms, values and behaviour necessary to survive as transformational” (p. 156). This could be achieved through an individualized training process that fosters an innovative style to leadership.

Looking at the type of leadership styles used by elementary administrators is important to this study. Developing an understanding for the type of leadership styles used by the participants in this study will provide a way to identify the type of socialization process the board of education is employing to train new administrators.

Networking

An important self-development strategy during role learning is the ability to develop a large network of colleagues. Building relationships within any organization is highly important since it provides a support system that greatly influences the success new employees experience (Griffin, Colella, & Goparaju, 2000). In the research Day (2001) has conducted that the development of relationships creates a commitment between individuals leading to an exchange of resources, and the increase of each individual's social capital. Brass (2001) defines social capital as an "opportunity or potential benefit created by relationship with others. It is owned jointly by the parties in the relationship and is less easily transferred than physical, financial, or human capital" (p. 134). The development of an individual's network becomes even more important as they progress to higher levels within an organization. Kanter (1977) spent several years studying a large, diversified corporation and found that

Strong alliances among peers could advance the group as a whole...Peer alliances often worked through direct exchange of favours. On lower levels information was traded; on higher levels bargaining and trade often took place around good performers and job openings. (p. 185)

She found that the most successful individuals within the corporation, those who received more frequent promotions, were far more effective at developing these types of peer networks. Having a significant social capital provides individuals with the power needed to complete the daily tasks of their role. In addition, Appelbaum and Hughes (1998) found that individuals who develop networks with upper management have greater access

to information, and experience greater job success.

It is clear from the large body of literature reviewed that developing leaders must cultivate complex networks with other members of the organization. These relationships, as McCauley (2001) states, are critical in leadership development since individuals within the network act as “counsellors who provide emotional support, cheerleaders who encourage and express confidence in the learner, and cohorts who can empathize and console” (p. 355). Brass (2001) explains that a network consists of

[everyone the] potential leader, knows and, indirectly, everyone these friends, acquaintances, neighbours, and colleagues of the leader know. It is this intersection of relationships that defines a leader’s role in the social structure of organizations, or simply a leader’s position within a social network of potentially beneficial relationships. (p. 134)

But Brass also highlights the need for rising leaders to be careful “not to link to others who are disliked or not trusted to avoid any perceptions of guilt by association” (p. 145). Similarly, Kanter (1977) and Whyte (1956) acknowledge that forming relationships with less desirable or ineffective senior organizational members can be career limiting. Aspiring leaders must be intentional in the development of their network to increase job success.

Administrative World

Teachers who accept administrative positions experience a significant change in their organizational role, and associated with the role a new cultural position within the organization. New administrators must be cognizant of both the organizational

boundaries and the culturally acceptable practices of the administrative social group to effectively learn their new role. These characteristics work together to create the social learning environment in which new administrators work while learning to carry out their new roles. The ability of a new administrator to quickly learn the boundary changes and the new group culture will influence the degree to which an individual is accepted into the administrative group.

Organizations, as Van Maanen and Schein (1979) point out, have many different possible shapes. Some consist of a long chain of hierarchical middle management positions, while others have few positions between the front line workers and the C.E.O. The varying structure and type of work carried out influence how individuals are socialized to new positions. According to Van Maanen and Schein, these transitions to new roles can occur along three different organizational boundaries: functional, inclusionary, and hierarchical boundaries. Socialization occurs along each of these three boundaries.

Functional boundaries generate selection criteria that are based on the candidates' skills and their ability to perform specific tasks. For example, a bank needing to find a branch manager for a vacancy will only consider individuals with a specific educational background, coupled with relevant banking experience. All other individuals within the organization will be excluded from consideration. Within education in Ontario the needed qualifications necessary are quite clear. Individuals must possess their Principal's Qualifications Part 1 and Part 2. To be eligible to register for these courses individuals must have qualification in three divisions, two Specialists or a Master of Education

degree, and most boards of education require applicants to have Special Education Part 1. Aspiring administrators also need to demonstrate the ability and inclination toward leadership and management of others. The influence of functional boundaries on socialization are quite straightforward. Teachers and vice-principals who are promoted assume new administrative roles and are assigned a new function within the board.

Inclusionary boundaries of socialization are much more subtle. Newcomers to the administrative group are held to the outer edges of the work-group for varying lengths of time (Schein, 1991). Interpersonal relationships and acceptance must be developed by the newcomers with key individuals of the work-group. According to Zaleznik (1970), movement to the inner circle of the group occurs only after coalitions are formed with close colleagues. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) contend that failure to develop effective relationships with co-workers prevents the movement of the individual to the centre of the social group. The transition between work groups, according to Jones (1986), socializes an individual to a distinct organizational role with its own accepted work practices, and forces an individual to learn the culture of the new position held. For many researchers (e.g., Allen, McManus, & Russell, 1999; Blase, 1995; Daresh, 1987; Hartzell, Williams, & Nelson, 1994), learning this culture is the greatest struggle during role learning. Taken together, the ideas of these theorists imply that inclusionary boundaries are less well articulated and more difficult to manoeuvre than are functional boundaries.

Hierarchical boundaries exist between the levels of the organization. The difference between a teacher and a principal, or between a lawyer and a judge, are typical examples of hierarchical boundaries. Prentice (1961) sees that there are distinct

differences between these pairings of positions in relation to the formal power and status granted to each by the organization. For Greenfield (1975), individuals will only cross a hierarchical boundary once they demonstrate the potential, the ability, the required perspective, and most importantly the merit to perform the new role. Macmillian (1994) refers to this process as *status passage*, and stresses that status passage is accompanied by a change from one organizational cultural group to another.

Looking at how individuals use their roles in organizations can help to explain the rate at which boundary passage within an organization occurs. All roles have varying degrees of formal authority (Heifetz, 1994) and power depending on the nature of the work assigned to an individual (Zaleznik, 1970). Heifetz maintains that certain individuals within organizations, regardless of their position, hold a greater informal authority base “to influence attitude and behaviour” (p. 101) of individuals within the organization than many of their colleagues. He notes that this influence is used to acquire information, resources, and special treatment.

When individuals accept administrative positions within a board of education, all three of these boundaries must be crossed, and entrance into a new cultural group within the organization occurs. This passage along all three organization boundaries produces a significant amount of stress within new administrators according to Hartzell, Williams, and Nelson (1994).

Administrative Culture

The culture of the administrative group is the second part of the administrative world that influences the type of socialization new administrators experience. The appointment of individuals to a vice-principalship represents the assumption of a new status or social position within the school board. Goffman (1959) states that this new position “is not a material thing to be possessed and then displayed; it is a pattern of appropriate conduct, coherent, embellished, and well articulated” (p. 75). Effective role learning involves the acquisition of a new set of cultural rules.

Culture, for Hallinger and Leithwood (1998), “is the source of values people share” (p. 132); it establishes the nature of interactions among members of the administrative group. Schein (1991) gives a much more complex definition of culture as:

- a) A pattern of shared basic assumptions,
- b) invented, discovered, or developed by a given group,
- c) as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration,
- d) that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore,
- e) is to be taught to new members of the group as the
- f) correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 247)

Culture is broken down into three levels: artifacts, values, and assumptions. Artifacts are the organizational structures and processes; cultural values are demonstrated through the strategies, goals, and philosophies of the organization; and assumptions are the

unconscious habits and beliefs of the group. Similarly, Smircich (1983) argues that,

The emergence of social organization depends on the emergence of shared interpretive schemes, expressed in language and other symbolic constructions that develop through social interaction... people enact their reality either individually or in concert with others. They are not merely bystanders, but active participants in the making of experience. They impose themselves on, and thus make, their world through intentional action that assumes its meaning and significance within the context of interpretive schemes embodying a particular pattern of purpose, value, and meaning. (p. 161)

Thus, new administrators self-socialize and are group socialized to accept the held beliefs of the administrative cultural group through the process of assimilation.

Many researchers have gathered empirical results that support Schein's definition of organizational culture. Daresh (1987) concludes that role learning forces the newcomer to learn about the formal responsibilities of the job, the accepted behaviours, and the unwritten rules of the organization. Greenfield (1975; 1985) has found that there is a strong correlation between an individual's ability to develop the new role's cultural values and perspectives, and the degree of success that the individual experiences in the new role.

The cultural practices of the administrative group generate a significant power base for established group members over newcomers. Delpit (1988) has characterized the power that is associated with a dominant group's culture during her work with black youth in America. She demonstrates the existence of a complex set of interactions for

individuals trying to establish themselves as a part of a different cultural group. Delpit defines five aspects to power:

1. Issues of power are enacted;
2. There are codes or rules for participating in power; there is a 'culture of power';
3. The rules of the culture of power are a reflection of the rules of the culture of those who have power;
4. If not a participant in the culture of power, being told explicitly the rules of that culture makes acquiring power easier; and
5. Those with power are frequently least aware of – or least willing to acknowledge – its existence. (p. 282)

A significant part of learning the culture of the administrative group resides in group members demonstrating the accepted artifacts, values, and assumptions of the administrative world. However, only those with similar backgrounds as members from the established culture will implicitly know the acceptable cultural practices. Members of the administrative group are themselves gatekeepers; they control who will be accepted and who will not. As Delpit concludes, “pretending that gatekeeping points don’t exist is to ensure that many students will not pass through them” (p. 292).

The last part of organizational culture to be considered within this section is the degree to which the nature of an organization displays masculine and feminine qualities. Van Vianen and Agnet (2002) describe a masculine organizational culture as power oriented, having hidden assumptions, practices, and norms that reinforce the values held

by senior management, approaches to conflict, managerial leadership style, views of self that place work before family, and loyalty to the organization. By contrast, feminine cultures are much more people-oriented through “the promotion of a relational self, maintaining balance in life activities, participation, and collaboration within the organization” (p. 332). The orientation of the organization to a masculine or feminine perspective greatly influences the employees’ desire to seek promotions, job satisfaction, and the employee–organization fit.

Principal/Vice–Principal Relationship

The relationship that exists within the administrative team of a school exemplifies the enactment of the administrative group’s cultural artifacts, values, and assumptions. The vice–principal must quickly establish an understanding of the expectations held by the principal and other group members for culturally accepted conduct of vice–principals. As Delpit (1988) argues, for individuals to be successful within a culture, “there is a political power game that is also being played” (p. 292). The game that the vice–principal must learn is the nature of the superior–subordinate relationship, and know his/her defined role. The superior–subordinate relationship is, however, a symbiotic one (Prentice, 1961). Vice–principals must recognize that there exists mutual dependence within the relationship for both individuals to be successful within their defined roles (Kanter, 1977; Prentice, 1961; Whyte, 1956). Hartzell, Williams, and Nelson (1995) have studied the development of administrative relationships and found that:

Building influence with the principal is a labourious, time consuming, and ceaseless undertaking, but it is absolutely essential if [vice–principals] are to be as

effective and influential as [they] can be. Some people resent having... to manage their relationship with the principal. These people fail to realize that these activities are investments. (p. 23)

Misunderstanding the importance of an effective relationship within the administrative team often produces some of the worst situations (Prentice, 1961), especially when the subordinate views the superior as ineffective (Kanter, 1977). Often the careers of both the superior and the subordinate can be limited by negative relationships (Maxwell, 1991). In their work, Hartzell, Williams, and Nelson (1995) found that successful vice-principals recognize that “the principal is not always more wise, mature, well informed, or knowledgeable than others in the school. The counsel, support, and quality performance of the subordinate is essential, and it should be shared” (p. 12). This positive approach, through the initiative of the vice-principal, helps the principal to increase his or her power base (Kanter, 1977). The relationship developed within the administrative team is vital to the vice-principal’s acceptance into the administrative group.

Acceptance into the Group

Self-presentation is the conscious process through which new administrators align their decisions, publicly stated opinions, and behaviours to the cultural beliefs of the administrative social group (Ferris & Mitchell, 1987). Appelbaum and Hughes (1998) regard self-presentation “as behaving in a manner perceived to be appropriate” (p. 87). For Tice and Faber (2001)

the major reason people try to present a desired view of themselves is to make themselves fit into a group or at least to fit into a role within the group...

self-presentation is thus motivated by the need to belong. (p. 141)

This allows the new administrator to create a social self within their new cultural group. Griffin, Colella, and Goparaju (2000) refer to this process as behavioural self-management. To be accepted by members of the administrative group, as Goffman's (1959) work shows, new members must "mobilize [their] activity so that it will convey an impression to others which it is in [their] interests to convey" (p. 4). Established members of the administrative group will often critically judge how new members interpret the unspoken rules (Daresh, 1987), and the image that a new administrator has created through self-presentation can quickly be shattered by minor transgressions of the cultural beliefs (Goffman, 1959; Whyte, 1956). For this reason it is critical for new administrators to not only make the right decisions, but also to appear to make the right decisions in the eyes of experienced administrators (Macmillan, 1994). This is the cultural power game that new administrators must play, and as Goffman (1959) explains, "through social discipline, then, a mask of manner can be held in place from within" (p. 56). While new administrators may quickly imitate the accepted cultural practices, the actual internalizing of the cultural values and assumptions into a social identity will take much longer (Saks & Ashforth, 2001).

Organizational culture has a great influence on the role learning of individuals. An individual who displays many of the cultural artifacts, values, and assumptions of the organization will experience a large degree of success in the new role. These individuals will be more accepting of the policies, the directives, and the job commitments required, thereby leading to high job satisfaction.

Organizational Profile

Individuals pursuing an elementary school principalship must deliberately work to expand his/her involvement within the board of education. Involvement is not a part of an individual's defined role, but includes opportunities to participate in new initiatives, sit on committees, learn about new roles, and participate in special programs (Griffin, Colella, & Goparaju, 2000; Saks & Ashforth, 1997). However, in a study of aspiring principals, Greenfield (1985) found that "it is difficult for candidates to know where they stand or what they're supposed to do in order to be successful candidates" (p. 11).

Johnson and Ridley (2004) report that numerous studies have found

The best way to generate visibility for protégés is to give them high-profile assignments. Working on important accounts, participating on influential committees, or landing a project that requires considerable interface with influential stakeholders are all excellent methods of enhancing positive exposure.

(p. 25)

These types of opportunities, as Kanter (1977) describes, provide individuals with professional growth and development. A second effect is that an individual's power grows as access to resources, information, and political support increase the ability to voice opinions and accomplish tasks through the use of informal networks. Furthermore, as Greenfield (1975) explains, involvement is a combination of an individual's "working environment, interpersonal relations, and professional activities" (p. 15) that creates a person's organizational space. Assertive administrative candidates are able to use these three factors to increase their visibility, whereas complacent administrative candidates are

unlikely to have the same success. Individuals who are able to effectively increase their organizational space through involvement activities, experience greater influence and power within their organization. Kanter's observations of organizations show that individuals attempt to build power by engaging in activities that are considered extraordinary, that are highly visible to others, and/or that solve organizational problems. Ultimately, she concludes, "the rewards go to innovators" (p. 177). An individual's influence and power expands as a more sophisticated and strategic perspective of the organization develops (Whyte, 1956), allowing for the organization's internal structure and relationships to be used as a power source (Maxwell, 1998).

Numerous studies (Appelbaum & Hughes, 1998; Ferris, Bhawuk, Fedor, & Judge, 1995; Gable & Dangelo, 1994; Greenfield, 1975 & 1985; Griffin, Colella, & Goparaju, 2000) have examined the social tactics individuals employ to learn new roles and to expand their involvement within the organization in an attempt to develop their organizational space. There are two concepts, organizational politics and organizational citizenship, that can provide a useful framework to understand the approach individuals use to organize their current knowledge on individual role learning.

Organizational politics is characterized as the management of the shared meanings used by individuals and groups to control actions, events, and situations in organizational life. Appelbaum and Hughes (1998) define organizational politics as "intentional acts to enhance or protect the self-interest of individuals or groups" (p. 85). Ferris, Bhawuk, Fedor, and Judge (1995) refer to four main categories of tactics in organizational politics: tactical-defensive, tactical-assertive, strategic-defensive, and strategic-assertive (actions

taken to develop reputation).

Candidates using tactical–defensive strategies during role learning are trying to manage the image others hold of them. This is accomplished through using apologies, justifications, and excuses for poor performance or lack of relevant knowledge needed for the new role. Griffin, Colella, and Goparaju (2000) identify two behaviours that appear to be tactical–defensive strategies. The first is trying to negotiate job change to redefine the expectations of the position. The second behaviour is relationship building with co–workers to receive “information, advice, social support, stress reduction, and/or skill and role behaviour instruction” (p. 459). The goal of this strategy is to build acceptance.

Tactical–assertive strategies involve individuals aggressively trying to impress and develop strong relationships with powerful individuals within the organization. Greenfield (1975) refers to this as a GASing process, meaning individuals are trying to Get the Attention of their Supervisors. This is accomplished through the process of ingratiation. Four main types of ingratiation have been characterized by Appelbaum and Hughes (1998). *Other enhancement* involves the “use of praise, approbation and flattery” (p. 88) to show the target person their views are accepted and appreciated. *Opinion conformity* occurs through the candidate displaying the accepted perspective (Greenfield, 1985; Lau & Shaffer, 1999) required of the position. *Rendering favours*, the third aspect of ingratiation, concentrates on developing “a sense of debt” (p.88) in others and an obligation toward the newcomer. The fourth strategy is *self–presentation* to demonstrate to others they possess the needed characteristics of the position. These assertive strategies are used to build influence along all of the organizational boundaries.

Strategic–defensive tactics during individual socialization prevent movement along the organizational boundaries. Ferris, Bhawuk, Fedor, and Judge (1995) explain these are behaviours that are self–handicapping such as learned–helplessness. Individuals with this orientation may avoid certain tasks or expect others to complete mandatory tasks for them during the course of a workday. Individuals with this orientation negatively affect their role learning and impede their development.

Strategic–assertive tactics are characterized by actions taken to develop a positive reputation within the organization. Involvement in work–related activities and behavioural self–management are two significant strategies within this group (Griffin, Colella, & Goparaju, 2000). Candidates actively seek out activities that are not part of their defined and expected role. Attending social functions, seminars, or joining committees are all examples of activities beyond the job. Assertive tactics, for Ferris, Bhawuk, Fedor, and Judge (1995), are demonstrated by the candidate’s “self–observation, goal setting, self–reward, and rehearsal” (p. 460) of required skills. Strategic–assertive tactics may be most useful in movement along the hierarchical boundary of an organization.

To some extent, all individuals within organizations use organizational politics. This fact that political strategies are used on a day–to–day basis should not, necessarily, have negative connotations associated to these strategies. The use of organizational politics can lead to both positive and negative outcomes, which moves judgement of these strategies into the realm of the ethical conduct of specific behaviour.

Greenfield (1985) in his study of educational administrators also studied

Machiavellian characteristics of new incumbents. He found that candidates with high Mach personalities and high motivation possessed an assertive perspective. These administrators “went out of their way to gain access and visibility to administrators, and actively used organizational space to further enhance visibility and access” (p. 20). Candidates with a low Mach personality, or low motivation, possessed a complacent perspective during role learning. These individuals did not participate in manipulating the organizational environment toward their own ends as frequently as the high Mach personalities.

Organizational citizenship behaviour is discretionary in nature and not imposed by the organization. These behaviours characteristically serve to improve the dynamics of the relationships in and function of the organization with no rewards, recognition, or promotion sought by the individual responsible (Ferris, Bhawuk, Fedor, & Judge, 1995). However, there is great difficulty in distinguishing the difference between organizational citizenship and some elements of organizational politics. This is especially difficult with the strategic–assertive tactics employed by some individuals during socialization.

The Role of Sponsors

To successfully advance in an organization individuals must have sponsors who advocate for their assumption of added responsibilities. Often the most influential sponsors are those closest to the aspiring leader and assume the role of mentor, or can also come from more senior executives who have taken notice of an up–and–comer (Whyte, 1956). Johnson and Ridley (2004) explain the role of a mentor:

can endorse protégés’ membership in important organizations, invite them to

exclusive meetings, and endorse them for work on special or high-visibility projects. Mentors may introduce protégés to important individuals in the organization... sponsorship is often a critical component of gaining eminence in one's career. (p. 12)

Doors of opportunity are opened to aspiring administrators through the power and influence of their sponsors. Without the backing of an influential sponsor, the administrative candidate's application for further advancement is jeopardized (Greenfield, 1975).

Having a powerful sponsor is an important component during career development, and significantly influences the development of the aspiring individual's profile (Kanter, 1977). These relationships with mentors and senior executives confer legitimacy (Brass, 2001), and for Johnson and Ridley (2004) these relationships also extend the "credibility, resources, and reputation of the mentor extend to the protege [sic], the protege [sic] receives early credibility and entree into important arenas of an organization precisely because he or she is associated with a powerful sponsor" (p. 102). Having an influential supervisor has been found to be a highly important factor in developing the profile of the individual, which influences determines an individual's career success (Daresh, 1987; Kanter, 1979). At the same time, Ball (1987) contends, the interpersonal relationship that develops "maintains a sense of commitment and trust on the part of the protégé toward his/her sponsors in return for encouragement and support in leadership opportunities producing a sense of mutual obligation" (p. 89), when principals or superintendents endorse individuals for promotion within education, it "communicates to others in the

field that the protégé has the backing, support, and promotion of a person of prominence” (Johnson & Ridley, 2004, p. 13).

Reputation

An individual’s reputation greatly influences the likelihood of being promoted within an organization (Grams & Rogers, 1990; Whyte, 1956). Assuming a position of added responsibility requires senior members of the organization to have the confidence to expect that the individual being promoted will effectively perform the required duties (Maxwell, 1998). As such, success depends on the individual’s ability to look, to act, and to dress the part. Or as Goffman (1959) describes, the individual’s “performance will tend to incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values” (p. 35), fostering the expansion of his/her profile and the development of his/her reputation. Similarly, Tice and Faber (2001) contend that “people who present themselves as likable and competent are more likely to win job promotions” (p. 141).

Ultimately, those individuals who know the proper interpersonal communicative skills experience greater success in achieving promotions than individuals who lack this social awareness (Voros, 2002). Appelbaum and Hughes (1998) contend that:

organizations prefer a particular image that consists of being loyal, attentive, honest, neatly groomed, sociable, and so forth. By deliberately trying to exhibit this preferred image, an individual can make a positive impression on influential members of the organization. (p. 92)

Likewise, Hartzell, Williams, and Nelson’s (1995) work shows that highly successful school administrators understand that “no matter how good you are, your reputation depends on other people” (p. 20), and aspiring administrators must make contributions to

the board upon which others will comment.

Business executives' and educational leaders' reputations stem from their leadership presence. Voros (2002) highlights eight elements that create leadership presence: focus, intellect, charisma, communicative skills, passion, culture fit, poise, and appearance. These elements influence the confidence and energy conveyed by individuals and increase an individual's power within the current position. Kanter (1977) has found people were more likely to accept direct attempts to influence them from people they defined as among the powerful... Thus, people who look like they can command more of the organization's resources, who look like they can bring something that is valued outside into the group, who seem to have access to the inner circles that make the decisions affecting the fate of individuals in organizations, may also be more effective as leaders of those around them – and be better liked in the process. (p. 169)

The nature of an educational administrator's work extensively deals with interpersonal communication, which necessitates leadership presence. Goffman (1959) demonstrates how this 'air of competency' develops an aspiring administrator's reputation leading to an expanded organization profile because "they look like executives, not because they can work like executives" (p. 47).

Endorsed for Promotion

The final hurdle aspiring administrators encounter is the formal selection process to determine who is chosen to be endorsed for promotion. Many boards of education use similar selection criteria such as educational qualifications, board involvement, and

leadership potential followed by a formal interview (Greenfield, 1975; Macmillian, 1994; Pounder & Young, 1996). However, Cline and Necochea (2000) argue that the socialization process that has occurred before any formal applications for promotion will “determine who will be selected, prepared, and promoted within the organization” (p. 155).

Even with a formal rating system to establish promotion merit, many sponsors are able to use their influence and power to influence the promotion of their protégé (Kanter, 1977). Ultimately, Johnson and Ridley (2004) conclude that “a mentor’s endorsement will exert tremendous influence on whether the protege [sic] will be competitive” (p. 102), and included in the group of interview candidates. Similar to business executives, it is up to the aspiring administrators to sell themselves once at the interview. Voros (2002) has done extensive research on executive recruitment and stresses that, during successful interviews, executives must display passion, commitment, and energy, coupled with the desire to effect change within an organization. Selection committees are looking to promote those individuals who have learned to “persuade, listen, exercise patience and restraint, offer sympathy, feel empathy, and recover from the emotional assaults common to group give-and-take... it’s especially important to demonstrate your people skills” (p. 201).

Summary

The interaction among the socialization tactics used within an organization, the interpretations of these tactics by the newcomer, and the newcomer’s own social tactics will greatly influence role development. In short, the characteristics of the organization

and the personality of the individual both contribute to the success of cultural learning and to boundary passage (Kanter, 1977). Where there is a good fit between the organization and the individual, role learning will occur more quickly, and the individual will develop a greater amount of influence. This results in the candidate who holds the new position being viewed as valuable to the function of the organization. If there is not a good organization–individual fit, however, the opposite will be true, and the candidate will be viewed as less valuable to the organization and, therefore, less successful in the role.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The purpose of this study was to investigate the socialization and training individuals experience during their transition from a teacher to an elementary school principal. A qualitative methodology was employed through a semi-structured interview format exploring the experiences of participants. This chapter justifies the methodological stance of the research.

Design

A qualitative methodology, with a grounded theory design, was employed to investigate the process of socialization individuals experienced during the transition from teachers to that of elementary school principals. The exploration of the learning an administrator experiences during his/her training was a complex phenomenon to explore since numerous factors, interactions, and points of influence have shaped each administrator's development.

The process of socialization into administration is a complex and multifaceted process to investigate. For this reason, qualitative research was undertaken with semi-structured interviews. Support for selecting a qualitative research approach is found in Creswell's (2002) statement:

qualitative research is generally used when the inquirer is interested in exploring and understanding a central phenomenon, such as a process or an event, phenomenon, or concept. This exploration is needed because little existing research exists on the topic or because the issue is complex and its complexity needs to be better understood. (p. 62)

Each of the participants, as a new administrator, was faced with a variety of learning

experiences, such as the culture of the new school; the resolution of conflicts with students, parents and teachers; the acquisition of the complete nature of the new role; and development of the technical skills necessary for the new roles. These interactions can be problematic to characterize and difficult to quantify through other research methods. For these reasons a qualitative methodology was used in this research project.

The utilization of qualitative interviews with participants was determined as the most effective way to investigate the socialization process of becoming an elementary school principal. This approach involved the presentation of broad questions to participants about their learning experiences to allow participants to contemplate and communicate their personal stories. According to Creswell (2002), this approach is referred to as grounded theory and is “a systematic, qualitative procedure used to generate a theory that explains, at a broad conceptual level, a process, an action, or interaction about a substantive topic” (p. 439).

Alternatively, this study could have used surveys with the use of Likert scales and written responses. This research method can also pose questions that examine the various learning experiences of participants. However, it was concluded that this form of research would not elicit robust participant responses since individuals often self-edit their meta-cognition during written responses and comprehensive explanations are not provided. Interviews, with the use of oral communication, render a rich source of data to analyze since participants are empowered to reflect upon their experiences without the limitations that are associated with written language and are able to speak freely. As a result, a deep level of understanding of the socialization process was achieved through the

use of interviews allowing for a more relaxed conversation to occur while clarifying the posed questions.

Selection of Participants

The purpose of this study was to investigate the process of socialization during the transition from teacher to elementary school principal. A purposive sampling was utilized to identify participants who had recently experienced this phenomenon. According to Creswell (2002), purposive sampling is a qualitative technique used to intentionally select individuals who have experienced the phenomenon and are willing to participate in the study.

The process of participant selection had to be negotiated with the school board involved in this project. First, approval for the research had to be endorsed by the school board's Research Ethics Committee. As per their instructions, I established a consultative relationship with the chair of the local principals' association to determine an appropriate approach to participant selection. Through consultation with the Association Chair, it was determined that the most appropriate method for participant canvassing was through an internally distributed e-mail message generated by myself and sent to elementary school principals, followed by the Chair soliciting participants at the next board-wide administrative meeting. Administrators who were willing participants e-mailed me directly. Initially participation was to be limited to six individuals. However, due to participant interest it was decided to include all 10 participants who responded.

Administrators at various points in the board's hierarchy were selected. This provided a variety of perspectives and experience levels in a supervisory role to

characterize the process of administrator socialization and training. A total of 10 administrators were interviewed. Seven of the participants, three males and four females, were new elementary school principals with less than 5 years of experience in their current position. Two participants, one male and one female, were experienced elementary school principals with over 10 years experience. The final participant was a male superintendent. These participants provided a diverse sampling based on age, and gender to provide a greater diversity of voices for this study.

Instrumentation

Questions for this study were designed after reviewing the literature. A set of interview questions was developed that explored administrators' experiences in relation to the nature of their new administrative position, the organizational training opportunities, the culture of the administrative group, and the self-evaluation strategies used by administrators. The pilot interview instrument was designed to organize the semi-structured interview around a framework to explore a participant's role learning experiences.

The pilot questions were then reviewed by two experienced administrators, who were not employed by the school board under study, to review and suggest modifications to the interview questions. Their input was an essential part in the development of open-ended questions that invited participants to provide personal and detailed accounts of their experiences during the interview. Several questions were removed, rephrased, or replaced with other questions to reduce repetition in the initial instrument. The interview instrument used in this study can be found in Appendix A.

Data Collection and Recording

Participants who responded to the e-mail invitation were contacted and an interview time arranged at a mutually convenient time and location. All participants were provided with an interview package that contained an Information Letter (Appendix B), two copies of the Brock University Informed Consent Form (Appendix C), the interview questions (Appendix A), and a Thank You Letter (Appendix D). The information package and the procedure for the interview were reviewed with each of the participants, and a signed copy of the consent form was received from the participant before commencement of the interview.

A strict protocol was followed for each of the interviews conducted. Before the interview began the Brock University Informed Consent Form was read by each participant. I then stressed that the interview would be tape-recorded for later transcription, and that only the thesis supervisor and the researcher would have access to the statements made by participants. The last item reviewed was that at any time participants had the right to omit questions, remove comments, or to stop the interview entirely. Participants then signed two copies of the Brock University Informed Consent Form; I retained one copy and gave the participant the other. The interview then commenced. All interviews were approximately 1 ½ hours in length.

Upon completion of each interview the audio-recorded interviews were transcribed by the researcher. Each participant was e-mailed the verbatim transcript to provide participants the opportunity to clarify their comments, omit certain statements, and modify statements they felt necessary. Once the review of the transcripts was

complete, participants sent the interview file back via e-mail. After reviewing the transcripts, six participants approved the transcripts with no changes, while the remaining four participants made minor clarifications or highlighted grammatical errors. However, no participant deleted any comments. Tapes were kept for the duration of the study and then were destroyed upon completion.

Data Processing and Analysis

Once participants approved the transcription of interviews, an inductive approach, through a grounded theory design, was used to analyze the data. As Creswell (2002) states, grounded theory allows a coding process to be used to “make sense out of text data, divide it [sic] into text or image segments, label the segments, examine codes for overlap and redundancy, and collapse these codes into themes” (p. 266). This was the method of analysis for this project.

The process of analysis used in this thesis is referred to as *open coding* in grounded theory (Creswell, 2002). Categories were identified from each transcript and were compared to compress similar text segments into emerging categories developed from the data. Through constant comparisons to the participants’ experiences, an emerging theory was developed to clarify the process of administrator role learning during socialization and training.

The first analysis of interviews was conducted by underlining interesting text segments. A descriptive word or phrase, such as ‘mentoring’, ‘learning strategy’, or ‘expected behaviour’, was also attached to each text segment as a coding method.

The second step in the analysis was conducted through the cross comparison of

interview transcripts. Overlapping codes were collapsed into categories that were representative of the data. These themes were further reduced into four categories that were identified as perspective changes, administrative culture, development strategies, and board profile.

The third analysis of the transcripts involved the use of coloured highlighters to identify text segments that were a part of a particular category. New files were then created based on the four categories, and each text segment from all the transcripts were placed in the appropriate file and labelled with a coding system to identify the source of the data.

At this juncture in the analysis, two participants were randomly re-contacted to complete a member check of the findings (Creswell, 2002). Appointments were arranged for a convenient time and location for the two participants, and the files of the categories were printed to provide representative examples. Both participants verified that the overall analysis was accurate, but, several suggestions were incorporated into the final analysis regarding the themes presented within each category. The participant input was a valuable process in studying the socialization phenomenon of new administrators.

Methodological Assumptions

The design of this qualitative study was based on several assumptions. It was assumed that participants selected to be interviewed would be informed representatives of the administrators from the local school board under investigation. As well, it was assumed participants would be forthcoming in their responses to questions and willing to provide their learning experiences so that the process of administrative socialization and

training could be sufficiently explored. A second assumption was that the study of a single school board would be more beneficial and allow for the combined participant experiences to more completely characterize the socialization experienced in a single context. It was felt that a multi-board approach would introduce greater variations in learning experiences which would prevent specific details of the socialization within this board of education from emerging.

Methodological Limitations

Several limitations are inherent in this qualitative design. The use of detailed interviews in this research prevents a large sample size, making the findings specific to one school board and not transferable to other boards of education. Another limitation involved the pool of eligible individuals to interview. Administrators who volunteered to be participants in this study may not have been representative of elementary school principals within this board of education. This study relied on participants' accounts and was limited to their willingness to reflect and share their personal learning experiences.

Establishing Credibility

The nature of this qualitative study required the interpretation of the research data to understand the phenomenon of socialization in the administrative cadre. Careful analysis of the data was undertaken to ensure that research bias did not enter into the findings. The first strategy used to verify the accuracy of results was the triangulation of data. Triangulation, as stated by Creswell (2002), is the process of finding corroboratory data from different sources. In this study, data triangulation was achieved by including participants from three different groups—superintendent, experienced principals with

more than 10 years in their current position, and new principals with less than 5 years experience. The second strategy used to establish credibility was the use of member checking of the research findings. Creswell (2002) defines member checking as a process by which “the researcher asks one or more participants in the study to check the accuracy of the account” (p. 280). Two of the participants in this study were re-contacted, and appointments made to verify the legitimacy of the analysis, and their recommendations guided the organization of Chapter Four. The two methods of validating the research findings, triangulation and member checking, helped to establish credibility for the methodology used in this thesis.

Ethical Considerations

Several ethical considerations made to ensure the well-being of participants were maintained through the completion of this study. First, approval for the research was obtained by the Brock University Research Ethics Board and the school board’s Research Ethics Committee. Second, participants were informed as to the nature of the study and explained their right not to respond to certain questions or to remove themselves at any point. Third, all information on participants’ experiences was screened and all text segments that revealed personal information or descriptions of their schools were removed from the transcripts to ensure anonymity. Particular attention was paid to the removal of all references to their personal or physical characteristics, or text segments that could possibly identify participants. Fourth, participants were provided the transcript of their interview to allow each participant to make clarifications of statements made, corrections if need be, and the removal of text sections with which he or she was

uncomfortable. These ethical considerations were used to foster a positive experience for each of the participants who volunteered for this study.

Restatement of the Area of Study

The socialization and training of individuals during their transition from an elementary school teacher to an elementary school principal was investigated within this research project. Interviews were conducted with 10 participants to examine their experiences and were analyzed to develop a better understanding for the role learning that occurs during this transitional process. Specifically, participants shift in perspectives, developmental experiences, understanding of group culture, and expansion of a board profile were highlighted in the data.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to develop a better understanding of the role learning and socialization individuals experience during their training to become elementary school principals. A qualitative methodology, using grounded theory design, was employed to investigate the learning process through in-depth interviews with 10 elementary school principals from a southern Ontario school board.

An inductive analysis of the interview data revealed four major themes among the 10 participants. The learning that these individuals experienced during their transition from a classroom teacher to an elementary school principal was characterized by shifting their organizational perspective, developing the skills necessary for the new role, learning about the administrative cultural world, and employing strategies to promote their organizational profile within the school board. These four themes will be used in this chapter as the framework for presenting the results of the study.

Perspective Shift

All individuals in an organization have a specific perspective, or personal view, of the daily activities and decisions that occur in the organization, and perspectives are likely to differ for people occupying different positions within the organization. The change and/or expansion of an individual's organizational perspective is referred to as a *shift in perspective*.

All of the participants in this study referred to such a shift when they noted that their role learning involved different understandings of the interactions between elementary administrators and individuals within the school, the board, and the community. Data analysis revealed three examples of shifts in perspective: the

development of a broader system view of the board of education, a change in their impressions of teachers, and the assumptions about the greater responsibility of school principals. These three shifts in perspective served to move the participants' viewpoint from a teacher's perspective to an administrator's perspective.

Global Perspective

Each of the 10 administrators experienced a shift in perspective during their transition from a classroom teacher to an elementary school vice-principal. A common shift for all of the participants was the development of a more *global perspective* of the school system. This was characterized by the ability to look beyond the interactions of a single classroom to better understand how their administrative decisions influence the entire school.

Principal 2 articulated this shift from a teacher's perspective to an administrator's perspective as follows:

The main difference was, as a teacher you were looking at 30 students; as a vice-principal you are looking at the entire school body. It is more of a global perspective and you're not so tunnel visioned. It is not what can I do with my class.

It's what can I do with all these students in the entire school population? (P2-03)

For this principal, the new administrative role challenged him to think outside of the classroom setting and to consider the larger question of how the organization of the school could be altered to improve the quality of education for all students within the building. As this administrator pointed out, "sometimes as a teacher you forget about the divisional goals, and the divisional goals forget about the school goals" (P2-08), but as an

administrator, constant reflection of the school's progress was needed to ensure improvement was ongoing.

Four of the principals discussed how their new administrative role as a vice-principal provided the opportunity to see their buildings at work on a daily basis and led to the development of a greater perspective of education. As teachers, participants were busy delivering a program to students and rarely had the opportunity to watch colleagues in the building interact with students. Principal 1 provided a good description of this shift in perspective:

You realize what a great job people do because you get to see the whole gamut.

Inside the classroom I just did my own program; you work with the kids and have some fun, but now you get an appreciation for it... you get to go and check it out and see the differences in how people deal with other people. For me, in the classroom I didn't have that appreciation. You might get to see inside one other classroom, but you don't have the opportunity to see a whole bunch of different classrooms and different teachers to see how they work. (P1-10)

By walking around the school, this administrator developed a better understanding of how the whole school interacted. Principal 1, Principal 3, and Principal 6 each described this as the acquisition of a global perspective.

The role of an administrator also required participants to develop a *global perspective* of how teachers conduct themselves within their school. Principal 8, a senior administrator, described how new administrators must learn the importance of their role in the evaluation of staff, as she stated:

As a teacher, you work as a teacher and carry on. You do what is best for your kids in the classroom, and if it is good for your kids you don't necessarily need to understand the repercussions down the road for everybody else. But as a vice-principal, you definitely have to see this... you have to understand you are responsible. You have to understand what teachers are doing, what teachers are saying, how they are contributing as it affects the whole school. (P8-04)

This senior principal stressed that new administrators must understand the role of administrators within school buildings. Participant 10, a superintendent, believed that administrators must monitor teacher performance and take specific steps to influence the direction of staff development. Both participants agreed that it was a responsibility of administrators to discipline staff when needed.

As the participants became more experienced, their perspective shifted as to how board level decisions affected their schools. Their perspectives expanded beyond the classroom or divisional setting, to understand how system-level interactions affected their schools. Principal 3 discussed the importance of new principals needing a broad *global perspective* of the school board to effectively lobby for their schools:

When you get to the principal level you have to have a system view because you have to know what is going on in the system, but you are there to represent your school. So when you are fighting for educational assistant time you have to be knowledgeable about the needs of the system, but you also have to know there is a kickback for your school. (P3-11)

As participants moved into administration, their perspective slowly changed from a

teacher's perspective focussed on the classroom to an administrator's perspective focussed on the interactions within the school. Their understanding of the staffing process, staff transfers, and other administrative duties that affected their schools expanded. This development of a *global perspective* was a significant part of participants' role learning as new administrators.

A New Perspective of Teachers

The second shift in perspective the seven new elementary school principals experienced was a change in the nature of their interactions with teachers. Five of the new administrators expressed surprise at how much their impressions of teachers changed during their first year as a vice-principal. As Principal 6 reflected on her first experiences, she said:

It was a whole different perception first of all of teachers. I found it amazing the trivial little things that people brought to the vice-principal. Stuff that I would have never brought so I didn't think of it. The things that were put on my desk from teachers I found incredible. (P6-08)

This was also the case for Principal 2 during his first year as an administrator. He found that his interactions with colleagues as a teacher were very different from his experience as an administrator.

No doubt about it, you get a total different perspective. One of the major surprises I had were sometimes the neediness of teachers. You start assuming that most teachers are like you, or how you worked and it isn't that way sometimes. So I guess that has also been an eye-opener. (P2-02)

As a teacher, Principal 2 was proactive and self-reflective. He stated that he rarely ever consulted with his administrators regarding classroom decisions or student discipline. Yet as an administrator, he found that a small number of teachers on his staff were very demanding, constantly seeking his approval of their own professional decisions or needing to be counselled on the correct actions to take to resolve a conflict. These were issues that this principal believed teachers use their own professional judgement to resolve.

Likewise, Principal 5 found that teachers presented the greatest challenge in her daily work:

every teacher thinks that their concern is the most important concern. Yet, you have 15 teachers in the building, and you are trying to keep them separate and trying to address them all at the same time. The biggest challenge in terms of doing this role would be dealing with teachers... they are not looking to grow, they are not looking to be vigilant about yard duty, legal things and they don't see the ramifications or the bigger picture. So you really spend a lot of time letting them in on what the big picture actually is. (P5-03)

At the school of Principal 5's first administrative appointment, she was confronted with several problems associated with the teaching staff. First, some teachers on staff were unwilling to change and unwilling to contribute to the growth of the school. Second, the administrator had to help resolve personal conflicts among staff members. Third, a couple of teachers on staff also used the office as a dumping ground for behaviour issues that were not being addressed in the classroom. Fourth, there was a teacher who was using the internet inappropriately during working hours. Resolving these conflicts was a challenge

for this administrator since the actions she took influenced the climate of her school.

All of the new principals acknowledged they experienced a shift in perspective with regard to their view of teachers in general. Participants were confronted by staff members who were less than motivated or who brought forth unrealistic requests and demands. This left these new administrators surprised by how a small number of teachers on staff required such a significantly larger proportion of their time than the majority of teachers did on staff each day.

Assuming a Leader's Perspective

The third shift in perspective the participants in this study experienced was during the transition from the vice-principal's position to their first school as principal. As a vice-principal, new administrators have the potential to discuss their ideas and school issues with the principal. New principals do not have a similar support in their schools. Five of the principals identified an increased sense of isolation during their first year as principal, primarily due to the lack of another individual with whom to talk through ideas or to vent frustrations. An example of this shift in perspective was given by Principal 1 as he discussed the transition from vice-principal to principal:

This was the biggest kind of change...basically, you are going to a new school and you are on your own then. There is no team aspect, there is not anyone else around to bounce ideas off which sometimes makes decisions a little difficult. (P1-02)

Principal 4 made positive comments about her transition to her principalship. She enjoyed having

sole responsibility. You can make your own decisions. You do not need to read

between the lines. You can make your decisions and you are responsible for those decisions... Ultimately, it's nice to be able to take a school and move it the way you want. Move it in a new direction. (P4-10)

The shift in perspective of being the sole leader within a building was also discussed by Principal 2 as he found a significant difference between these two positions:

Definitely that is the difference. That is one of the big differences. You are not sheltered as a vice-principal but all of a sudden you are a principal. Now, you are all by yourself. Before, your leadership experience dealt with two leaders, but now you are one leader in a building. So that can be one of the interesting dynamics of the actual promotion. Now I am going to have to make the final decision. (P2-15)

As the comments from these three principals demonstrate, there was considerable shift in perspective during the transition from a vice-principalship to a principalship. This shift was characterized by these individuals feeling a sense of isolation while assuming full responsibility for their schools, but the participants also developed a greater sense of autonomy in their decision making.

The participants in this study experienced several shifts in perspective. Each of these individuals entered administration from the classroom with a teacher's perspective of education. While these individuals were vice-principals, they experienced new interactions to which they had limited exposure as a classroom teacher. These on-the-job experiences caused the participants to develop a new perspective of their role within the educational system.

Development Strategies

The second major theme to emerge from the interview transcripts are the development strategies used during the training of administrative candidates to their new roles. Two types of development strategies were identified in the data. First, there are the *organizational development strategies* the staff members of the board, such as superintendents, consultants and curriculum services personnel, use to help train and socialize administrative candidates into vice-principals and principals. Second, there are the *individual strategies* the administrative candidates use to help themselves learn their new role. Both the organizational strategies and the individual strategies will be discussed in this section.

Organizational Development Strategies

Organizational development strategies are intentional acts carried out by board officials to assist new administrative candidates in learning the nature of their administrative role. The participants in this study discussed two separate types of strategies, *formal strategies* and *informal strategies*, that were used by their board of education to train them. Both types of strategies played a major role in the development of each participant.

Formal Training Strategies

The formal strategies used by this board were a series of training programs delivered by senior administrators. Training programs were designed for individuals at specific points in their administrative training. These courses were delivered in a group setting and sequenced to provide knowledge on administrative issues to foster the

development of specific knowledge and skills. Various training programs and seminars were provided to individuals at different points in their development including: teachers interested in administration, intern vice-principals, new vice-principals, and experienced administrators on various educational issues.

The first program participants experienced was designed for teachers who were interested in administration. This course was designed to expose selected teachers to the world of administration and to encourage those individuals to assume leadership roles within the board. Principal 8, a senior principal, spoke highly of this program, indicating that “it’s an excellent program because it teaches or allows teachers to realize whether administration is for them before having to take the courses” (P8–02). Each of the eight sessions dealt with a different aspect of administration to expose the teachers to some of the issues that are handled by vice-principals and principals.

The second training course this board offered was for intern vice-principals. These vice-principals were unqualified teachers placed in their administrative position on a temporary Letter of Approval from the Ontario College of Teachers for the duration of 1 year. Intern vice-principals were expected to obtain the necessary qualifications during that school year. The Superintendent interviewed for this study acknowledged that his board had experienced “the retirement of 30 principals in one year” (P10–11), which caused a shortage in administrators. This resulted in several teachers being appointed as intern vice-principals. Four of the participants in this study had been intern vice-principals and had participated in the training program that was held at the end of August before their first appointment. As Principal 2 described:

The V.P. Intern program was a week long. We found that very effective with giving you situations, and learning that not all decisions have to be made right away. Just little bits of advice that you need to take all the way through your career. I found that very helpful, and that was my first year before I started at my new school. (P2-07)

Similarly Principal 4 commented that the intern program was “basically a crash course on being a vice-principal” (P4-05). These two participants explained there was a need to provide intern vice-principals with some of the basic knowledge regarding their new role since those appointed did not have either of their Principals’ Part I or Principals’ Part II courses.

The third type of training course offered was intended for all new vice-principals. These workshops, however, were more indepth and focussed on specific tasks administrators must complete as part of their role. As Principal 3 explained:

These workshops would range on anything from budget to the staffing processes. There were also some good philosophical leadership things that helped people clarify that this is what they needed to do. All of that helps [new administrators] to again make connections and to learn who is doing what in the board. (P3-12)

These particular workshops were held once a month after the school day, and all vice-principals were expected to attend these sessions. As Principal 9, a senior principal, explained, missing a session would be “frowned upon big time and that person would definitely be spoken to by the superintendent... it would not go unnoticed” (P9-02). Three of the other participants also acknowledged the expectation that all administrative

candidates attend all scheduled training sessions arranged by the superintendent.

The last type of ongoing formal training this school board offered was open to all administrators. The monthly workshops, as Principal 4 explained, were arranged by the Special Education Department during a morning breakfast to provide administrators in-service on a variety of topics, such as “the importance of In-School-Team, the importance of I.P.R.C.s, the signing of I.E.P.s, and all the various aspects of Special Education” (P4-05). Principal 1 and Principal 6 expressed the sentiment that new administrators were expected to attend these sessions, and more experienced administrators were strongly encouraged to attend so that they stay current with the latest changes. In this way, ongoing professional learning was continually encouraged, and opportunities were provided by this school board.

The participants of this study were all positive toward the formal training opportunities offered by the board, but the volume of training was sometimes overwhelming. Participants expressed the feeling that “you could be in-serviced to death” (P3-12). Each of the new administrators discussed having to balance the need to stay current with the need to be at their school to ensure the effective operation of their buildings. As expressed by Principal 1:

There are always workshops. That is definitely not lacking, which is great for our board. It is just a matter of prioritizing. Sometimes you want to attend those workshops, but it might be to the detriment of what is happening back here at school. You really have to temper that. You can get yourself caught up in wanting to do all those workshops, but you may suffer because of that. Take it with a grain

of salt too, in the sense that you can't do it all at once. (P1–12)

A common sentiment among the new administrators interviewed was their need to be present in their school building on a daily basis. At times participants felt the amount of professional development encouraged by their board presented a conflict between what participants felt was best for their school and what was expected of them by senior administration. Balancing this demand for time was another key learning that new administrators had to develop.

The formal organizational strategies this southern Ontario school board developed provided a differentiated training program for individuals at various points in their administrative careers. Training of the participants began well before these individuals were qualified and continued to be provided through ongoing professional development as principals. One of the catch-phrases many of the participants from this board used was “life-long learning” (P1–12), and this emphasis was evident in the formal organizational strategies used by this board during the training of this study's participants.

Informal Training Strategies

The second type of organizational strategy senior administrators from this board used were *informal training strategies*. The informal training participants experienced as vice-principals was established primarily by the guidance of their principal. These learning opportunities were not structured. Instead, they were ad hoc and focussed on resolving conflicts, organizing events, such as the Remembrance Ceremony, managing the school budget, and completing other administrative duties. The informal training participants received was open-ended and varied from participant to participant.

The data showed that principals were responsible for the informal training vice-principals experienced. The school principal, all participants explained, delegated specific tasks to the vice-principal. The superintendent in this study commented that a vice-principal's "job description is to do whatever the heck your principal tells you to do" (P10-08).

Every participant in this study commented that there were great variations in the approach principals bring to training their vice-principals. Some principals were very collaborative and viewed their role as a mentor, while other principals were more controlling and unwilling to share power with their vice-principals. Comments from Principal 1 and Principal 3 were representative of all participants as they discussed how the types of experiences to which a principal exposes the vice-principal are "critical" (P3-04) and "hugely important" (P1-03) in the development of the vice-principal. This spectrum in principal styles was a concern for the participants in this study.

The most positive informal training experiences that the participants, as vice-principals, identified occurred with principals who were open and collaborative and who viewed their role to be that of a mentor. Participants observed that principals with this type of style took their role seriously during the development of their vice-principals toward a principalship. Principal 3 described how the principal he was placed with

was very, very supportive of making sure that I ran staff meetings, that I had budget input and design...We each did our own version of the budget, where we saw the needs and each liaised with our own group of staff. (P3-08)

This particular principal was also encouraged to build a portfolio of his experiences as a

vice-principal. The principal and he continually used these portfolios to evaluate how Principal 3 was progressing and to identify areas that needed to be developed.

Principal 4 explained that her second year in administration was spent with a very positive principal

who believed in mentorship, and I learned a ton that year. It wasn't like he was my boss, which I know a lot of people, as vice-principals, work with principals that think the vice-principal works for them. We were a part of a team. We sat down together. Together we were a united front, so I learned from his input, but he also respected mine. (P4-13)

The relationship Principal 4 developed with her principal provided the necessary environment for her to question and discuss the rationale behind the major decisions that were made that year. Her major learning experiences that year involved the staffing process, in particular how to work the process to get the most for the school, managing a school budget, and designing a school timetable. Similarly, Principal 5 stated that her principal

gave me free rein to experiment and to make decisions. There were times where I messed up and he asked me what I would do differently. Or, as I was going through it he would stop me and say, "Have you thought about this?" The number one thing is communication. (P5-06)

The constant feedback this participant received allowed her to reflect on her performance and to see where improvements were needed. This type of open communication also provided this administrative pair the opportunity to get "to know each other personally and

professionally” (P5–04), which contributed to the success Principal 5 experienced as a vice-principal.

Having a principal who believed in the mentorship process was key to the development of participants as vice-principals. As Principal 2 explained:

The hands-on experience is key to your development, key to your leadership success because if you’re not there and not making a decision, it’s hard to reflect on how you could have done something different. The reflective process, those are the type of things that are just priceless. (P2–07)

Throughout all of the interviews with participants this was a recurring theme. The support provided by a participant’s principal significantly influenced each participant’s development as an administrative candidate. Their principals, as Principal 7 described, provided a semi-structured learning environment to allow participants to initiate their own problem-solving abilities.

The most negative informal training participants experienced as vice-principals was with principals who did not provide learning opportunities or were not collaborative. There were a variety of negative experiences that participants described in this study. Some principals were unwilling to share power, whereas others were ineffective communicators or rarely discussed with the participants their progress. Three principals indicated that they were not given feedback on job performance, that their principals limited their learning experiences, and that there was generally a lack of communication between themselves and their principal.

Principal 4 found herself placed with a principal who was negative and lacked the

ability to develop positive staff relationships. As she explained, “the teachers had absolutely no trust in the principal” (P4–03), and “she got into quite a few confrontations... she would scream at them in front of me and it was just a horrible year” (P4–04). This participant also described her limited responsibilities as a vice–principal this way:

I was given nothing really in a leadership capacity, just joe–jobs. Bus duty, bus reprimand, discipline. However, she would override any discipline... at staff meetings she would not even let me speak; she would speak the entire meeting. (P4–06)

The entire year Principal 4 spent with this administrator made her feel as though she “was in the dark” (P4–05). For instance, she “never saw the budget because it was a power thing” (P4–06). This participant stated strongly that her principal that year “never taught [her] anything” (P4–03).

Another negative type of informal training occurred for Principal 6 through the lack of communication with her administrative partner during her first year as a vice–principal. Her principal was easy to work with and allowed her to take on responsibilities, but did not provide any feedback on her performance. This limited her learning and forced her to seek out staff members, as she explained:

I learned a lot on my own that year. I learned a lot from the staff being frank with me, and luckily I had that relationship because my principal was very hands–off...You’re not going to learn to be a great principal if you work for someone like that, so I think the principal is crucial. (P6–14)

Participants stressed that communication was critical during their development as

vice-principals. The lack of collaboration with her first principal prevented Principal 6 from learning many of the skills she learned with her second principal, “who believed in mentorship” (P6–15). Principals who controlled much of the power in the administrative team of the school prevented their vice-principals from initiating their own ideas. In this type of administrative pairing, participants received the message they were not to act without the approval of their principal. This limited their ability to make decisions and to take on leadership roles within their schools.

Recommendation of Participants

The negative experiences described by participants above show the importance of the mentorship process during the informal training of elementary school vice-principals. Six of the seven new principals strongly recommended that their board should re-assess the informal training vice-principals receive within the schools in which they are placed. Currently, they believe there exists too much variation in such learning experiences.

The most significant recommendation, given by five of the participants, was for their board of education to consider the placement of vice-principals with principals who value the mentorship process. As Principal 1 explained:

The biggest key is having people in the position of mentor, colleague, confidante, to bring other people through... you want vice-principals paired up with good principals that are willing to work hard, work with their vice-principals to effect some change, and show their vice-principals the ropes as opposed to you're on your own. (P1–16)

Principal 6 shared a similar view:

We need to have our VPs trained to be principals. You are only hurting the system when you put vice-principals under someone who doesn't give them the time, isn't a good role model, or who thinks the vice-principal is their little helper. Too often these poor vice-principals are then becoming principals and they are faltering a little bit, and it is through no fault of their own. Their training hasn't been fair.

What training has a principal had to have a vice-principal? Where are the workshops for that? (P6-17)

The participants all agreed some principals should never have vice-principals.

Interestingly, it appeared to be common knowledge among participants that certain principals lacked the interpersonal skills necessary to be effective mentors.

All three of the senior administrators in this study acknowledged their board did not have defined expectations or a definite role a principal was to assume during the development of their vice-principal. However, Senior Principal 2 commented that many different board documents, such as the Leadership Assessment Document, had been used to assist principals to facilitate the development of his/her vice-principals. She also believed that both the principal and the vice-principal are professionals and should be responsible for the creation of an effective mentoring relationship.

Two participants in this study held a very different impression of the quality of mentorship administrative candidates sometimes received. Both agreed all situations are not ideal for vice-principals to learn their new administrative roles. However, Principal 2 and Superintendent 1 believed that not all learning experiences needed to be positive.

Principal 2 reflected on his mentorship as follows:

I was fortunate to have two positive experiences, but I think I also had negative experiences while I was teaching. I think you are going to have to learn from any situation that you are in, and that is what it comes down to, it really does. Because you're not always going to be in the best situation. (P2-15)

Likewise, the superintendent believed "the ideal would be to have one of each type" (P10-08), a principal who is supportive and a principal who is not supportive. He also commented that

you learn as much from having a principal who isn't a star, who is very inflexible and learning what not to do. Sometimes vice-principals who are working with an absolute superstar principal have things go so effortlessly... they assume this job will happen automatically not realizing all the other stuff that has gone on to make it be that way. (P10-08)

The issue of vice-principal placements was a sensitive, emotionally charged issue as participants discussed their opinions. Three participants had raised this issue directly with superintendents and that stressed successful role learning occurred best in an environment where vice-principals were given various learning opportunities that were collaboratively completed with their principals' input.

Both the formal and informal training strategies the board in this study used were important in the development of participants as new administrators. The formal training strategies developed by the superintendent of leadership development provided these individuals with the necessary knowledge needed to perform their daily duties. The informal training strategies participants experienced provided them with the practical,

hands-on experience they needed to develop into administrators. The principals interviewed also believed that the formal training provided by board officials was effective, but they expressed the need for more effective administrative pairings to improve the informal training used within their board.

Individual Development Strategies

The *organizational development strategies* represent only the actions taken by members of the school board as part of the training provided to individuals pursuing an elementary school principalship. During their learning, the participants were confronted by many unfamiliar situations and tasks that they had never done before. As administrative candidates, they used *individual strategies* to learn the needed administrative skills that were a part of their new role. The three strategies that were identified in this study were: developing a self-improvement plan, fostering effective relationships with their principals, and developing a network of colleagues as a support system. These three strategies allowed the participants to successfully learn their new roles as elementary administrators.

Self-Improvement Strategies

A common trait all the participants shared was an ability to self-reflect. There were numerous examples provided where these administrators identified personal weaknesses and developed an action plan to improve a specific skill. Their internal desire to improve pushed them to confront their own personal weaknesses as administrators. The use of self-improvement strategies was necessary for participants to develop the required skills to be an effective administrator.

The nature of participants' professional development changed as they prepared

themselves for an administrative position. They began to attend more workshops, conferences, and courses that were directly related to the issues they would confront as administrators. Principal 6 explained how she prepared herself for administration this way:

I really cut back a lot on the after school teaching type workshops and I focussed a lot more on First Aid, Non-violent Crisis Intervention, and that sort of stuff.

School-wide programs like Lions Quest. Thinking if I am going to go this route, I don't know what school I am going to be in, I really don't know what the climate is going to be... So I really just tried to take as many things that I could add to a resume that would make me somebody that could fit any school. (P6-07)

As this principal demonstrated, taking a variety of workshops relating to school-based issues was an excellent individual strategy to acquire some of the skills necessary to be an effective administrator.

All seven of the new principals pointed out personal areas of weakness that needed to be developed, such as organization, public speaking, and record maintenance. The key to each one of their improvements was the ability to reflect on their practices and the development of new habits to improve their areas of weakness. Principal 2 struggled with organization as a new vice-principal:

I was fairly organized, but you cannot get by in this job being fairly organized. You have to be very organized. There was not a magic formula I used to improve. I said to myself, What can I use as my resources to improve? I've got my daily planner, I've got my Palm-Pilot, I've got my steno pad that I write on non-stop. Those are the things I use now for organization. (P2-02)

Through self-monitoring this principal was able to more effectively organize the many pieces of information coming his way. He felt this ability to improve was a major reason for his success.

A common struggle among participants was developing effective time management strategies during their vice-principalship. Principal 4 talked about how demanding she found the role of vice-principal. She commented that “being a vice-principal is far more difficult than being a principal” (P4-04). Similarly, Principal 1 explained:

Depending on what your teaching load is makes it that much more difficult. If the principal is out of the building, and you are teaching, who are you going to get to cover when there is an issue? How do I deal with this? Is it an emergency or can it wait? (P1-01)

Likewise, Principal 3 struggled with the workload of the vice-principalship as he explained:

When you are the vice-principal of a school of 350 plus kids, people look to you constantly to deal with discipline, even when you are in the classroom. So you’re a vice-principal 100%, but the time you get to deal with issues is very small... I found myself dealing with lots of issues by bringing it into the classroom. (P3-05)

Specific strategies were identified by the participants to deal with the workload of the vice-principalship. Many of the principals stressed the importance of delegating, improving organization, returning phone calls as soon as possible, and “not re-inventing the wheel to complete jobs” (P1-07). However, even with developing coping strategies, each participant admitted they had to “spend a lot of extra hours at school getting the

administrative work done if they were going to do a good job” (P9–03).

The last self-improvement strategy identified by the new administrators was the ability to resolve school issues through defined processes and procedures. Participants established routines, developed methods for dealing with student behaviour, and found ways to communicate with parents. Principal 7 put it this way:

it does not matter what you do as long as you have a process to go through. It does not matter whether it is doing a yard cleanup, planning a fun fair or an intermediate trip, or dealing with parents who have issues. You still have a process to be able to go through. Successful teachers already have some skills in process, but it becomes defined as an administrator. (P7–10)

As this participant learned his new role, more complex strategies and processes were developed to perform his role more effectively.

Relationship Building Strategies

Every participant employed relationship building strategies to develop positive working relationships with members of their school community. Six of the principals emphasized the need for members of the school community to feel that their concerns were valued. Principal 2 stressed:

No matter how small a problem is, it still is important. If you give parents or staff the idea that it isn’t important, then that is just going to make more of a headache for the administration and for the staff in general. (P2–01)

There were several steps to developing effective relationships. First, as a new administrator, each participant commented he/she began by

proving yourself to staff. That you are there to work with them, and that you are going to work on issues that they are facing... [and by] following through on things in a timely way so that people know that they can rely on you. (P3-04)

A second effective step was to “thank the people who need to be thanked, and recognize the people doing a good job. Make sure those individuals continue to feel valued and worthy” (P7-17). The third step was to realize that “the organizational and administrative things anyone can learn; but most of all, individuals taking on an administrative role have to be ready to build relationships with other people” (P3-11). Building effective relationships was dependent upon how participants interacted with members of their school community.

Another aspect of relationship building was the ability of the participants to resolve conflicts among members of their school community. For Principal 7 getting her school to operate effectively required motivating staff members, which meant she had to

find ways to get people to work. Or work with people to get it to work... It is bringing more people on board by dealing with and working with people that you know you can work with and be successful. Do not waste your time with those who are dragging their butt. If you do, you will become exhausted and you have not made any headway. (P7-16)

All of the new administrators discussed the importance of building personal as well as professional relationships with all members of the school, as seen in this comment:

The respect in the personal relationships that you build, it is the time you take to get to know the person, it is the trust, and it is the dignity... You have to start with

getting to know the people. It really is a personal thing. We have a job to do, but we are also people. (P5–01)

In all cases, Principal 5 commented, there is a need for administrators to display compassion for the personal issues that occur in individuals' lives. Three other participants described the need to show an empathetic side as an administrator, as this can greatly add to the positive atmosphere within a school.

Participants were asked to reflect on the type of interpersonal traits they had observed of less successful administrators. Principal 7 effectively summarized two types of common problems that she had observed of some new administrators. The first difficulty some new administrators experienced was with sharing in the decisions. It appeared to her that ineffective administrators in the past failed to take on

a team kind of approach. It has been a power or top down kind of a thing. They do not trust people to do the job, they do not see other people as professionals giving them leadership and responsibilities. Instead, they feel the need to take charge of everything. (P7–16)

The second type of difficulty new administrators experienced was the inability to gauge the climate of their school since

they really do not listen to what is wrong. They have not been an active listener, so they did not separate the real issues of people during the operation of the school. They pay attention to the wrong stuff. Or they do not read that there is a problem. They think everything is wonderful. If you have a good sense of your staff, you know when something is wrong. You sense it, know something is wrong and put it

on the table for discussion. (P7–17)

New administrators, as Principal 2 pointed out, must “have the ability to develop relationships, maintain relationships, and sustain relationships. If you can’t do that, then you are not going to be effective” (P2–11).

Networking Strategies

The third type of individual development strategy important for participants was to create a *network* of colleagues. Participants regularly had to acquire specific knowledge to resolve a conflict or solve a problem that was not located within their school building or in any available resource document. To effectively resolve these situations, participants had to develop a network of colleagues as information sources.

All of the newer administrators in this study explained that they developed friendships with several experienced administrators to act as informal mentors. As situations presented themselves, participants collaborated with a confidante before taking action and received feedback on the possible benefits and consequences. The importance of developing a network with several experienced administrators was explained by Principal 1:

You realize that you are not alone, and that the biggest key is networking with other more experienced administrators to realize that they have dealt with this before and they are someone you can call. (P1–05)

These informal senior mentors would discuss the alternative courses of action with these individuals to allow the new administrators to understand the consequences of each possible action.

In addition to networking with senior contacts within the board, five of the participants noted that they made important connections with other new administrators. These connections occurred while completing administrative training courses offered to the board. Principal 1 explained his experience this way:

My peers that went through the courses with me formed bonds, and still to this day we stick together. We went through it... we had some fun with it and some good chuckles. We still regularly call each other for advice. (P1-11)

Many of the participants acknowledged they still communicated two and three times a day with individuals in their network. Sometimes it was just to vent their frustrations concerning staff or to share jokes. Other times they were consulting each other on the best tour companies to use for trips, sports wear companies for school uniforms, or clarifying questions concerning certain administrative duties.

Developing a network of colleagues was critical to the success of each participant because their networks provided them a support system to contact peers when confronted with a confusing situation or conflict. Principal 2 used his network regularly as he was

always looking for people that have had success, they have had a best practice. It doesn't bother me. I have no problem calling them and saying, "Hey, what did you do to..." Why wouldn't you do that when you've got great resources right in this board to do that? You would be crazy not to use that type of information. (P2-09)

Each of these administrators demonstrated an openness to collaborate with colleagues to create a strong support system for each other, and created the opportunity for a network of colleagues to develop into a support system for each other.

Another aspect to each participant's network was building relationships with individuals who held informal influence within departments of the board. Participants occasionally experienced individuals who were unable or unwilling to help resolve particular issues even though these individuals were assigned the responsibility on the board's flow chart. The trick for participants described by Principal 8 was

knowing who the right person is to phone so that you get what you want. It's just making phone calls, being polite, asking the right questions, thanking people for the jobs they do for you so that the next time you phone them, they go the extra mile for you, and you don't phone them for trivial things. (P8-06)

An example of using a network to obtain informal information was described by Principal 3:

I had a question about mileage for a staff member yesterday, and I know there is an accounting department and someone in the accounting department, if I open up my little book, has mileage as their responsibility. But I have worked with TJ before. I phoned him and explained the tricky situation... That type of relationship is crucial because he didn't have to help me. It's more the type of foundation you have set up with that person. (P3-09)

Building effective relationships with a variety of individuals within the school board provided participants a network of informal information sources. These relationships proved to be critical for the new administrators in this study to resolve many of the issues they dealt with on a daily basis.

Summary

Both the organizational development strategies and the individual development strategies identified in this research played a major part in the role learning of participants as new administrators. As board officials used organizational development strategies to help develop participants, the participants were also busy interpreting and analyzing how best to learn their new role. The success of the participants as administrative candidates was dependent upon their ability to adjust and respond to unfamiliar situations by employing their own strategies to gain the information needed to be effective in their new role.

Administrative World

Learning the accepted cultural practices of the administrative world was a challenging task participants faced during their role learning. Similar to other social groups, the accepted behaviour of the administrative culture was not defined for these new administrators. Participants, as both teachers and vice-principals, had to build their knowledge of the administrative cultural rules and exhibit the cultural norms of the administrative group on a regular basis in order to be accepted by other administrators within the group. Non-performance of the established cultural practices would have prevented participants from further promotions.

The third theme in the training and socialization of participants as new administrators was the ability of participants to quickly and successfully learn the social culture of their new position. There were four aspects of the *administrative cultural world* that influenced the learning participants experienced: a change in social groups, the

structure of the superior/subordinate relationship, the accepted cultural rules of the administrative social group, and the struggle to be accepted by senior administrative group members.

Changing Social Groups

All participants in this study acknowledged they experienced a significant change in social groups when accepting their first administrative position. No longer were these administrators a part of the teacher cadre; they were now a part of a separate group belonging to the board's management team. The challenge for the participants was to deal effectively with the transition between these two social groups.

All seven of the new principals recognized their administrative role came with this change in social groups. They understood that their social interactions with staff members needed to change as a result of their new role, but this was harder in practice than in theory. Principal 6 expressed this sentiment as follows:

You are separate. As a teacher, I could sit or go out for drinks and you talk about each other, right or wrong. The minute you become a vice-principal, and you find yourself in one of those conversations, you are talking about someone who is working under you. (P6-07)

The sense of isolation participants experienced in their new position created an environment where relationships with certain staff members were easier to make than with other administrators who were not as close in proximity on a daily basis. Contributing to this dilemma was that the younger administrators in this study identified more with teachers in the classroom than with fellow administrators since their staff members were

of similar age and at similar life stages.

The three senior administrators in this study stressed that aspiring administrators must see the difference between teachers and administrators if they wanted to be promoted within the board. This was evident in the following comment made by one of the senior administrators, Principal 9:

When you become a vice-principal or a principal, you are not in the same social group with staff as you were when you were a teacher. Teachers do not see you as a teacher anymore, and your role is totally different. You can evaluate teachers and you can discipline teachers, and if you do that then you will not be looked upon in the same social light as you were before. That is the difference. (P9-04)

The senior administrators in this study stressed that relationships with teachers and support staff change once individuals enter administration. Along with this comes the responsibility for administrators to evaluate staff members, to ensure that all staff members are effectively completing their duties, and to address any staff shortcomings.

As administrators, participants became a part of the board's management team, and with this came responsibilities as explained by Principal 9:

Administrators have to understand what teachers are doing, what teachers are saying, how teachers are contributing as it affects the whole school... That is the difference; you have to understand that as an administrator you are responsible for evaluating, you're the boss, and that is a fine line. You want to be able to socialize with people, and you want to be able to enjoy other people's company, and have a nice rapport with people to make it comfortable. But ultimately you still are the

boss. In that way you need to take a step back. (P9–05)

Principals 2, 4, 5, 8, and 9 believed that new administrators must ensure relationships with staff remain professional so that their judgement would stay objective and not become clouded by personal relationships.

The superintendent was direct in his explanation for the importance of this shift in social groups. He believed new administrators must understand their new role comes with “a clear line; they are now the boss. They now have responsibilities, they have performance appraisals, for doing discipline where that is needed, and if necessary institute disciplinary procedure” (P10–04). The expectation for participants was that they were to conduct themselves in a professional manner and to maintain a degree of separation from the staff as a preventative measure. The superintendent believed that this would help so relationships would not become personal and cloud professional judgement. This, he contended, was a key learning for all individuals interested in becoming an administrator.

Understanding the Superior/Subordinate Relationship

The second cultural learning required of participants occurred once they were accepted into their first administrative position as a vice-principal. Participants had to understand that the principal/vice-principal relationship involved a power structure with a superior and a subordinate that dictated specific behaviours on the part of participants to demonstrate commitment, loyalty, and support toward their principals. They communicated the fact that the administrative cultural world expected vice-principals to display these characteristics.

The initial step for participants in the development of their relationship with their principal was to initiate informal conversations during the first several weeks of working together. A natural opportunity occurred for participants to dialogue with their principal through the completion of the various administrative duties that needed to be completed for the start the next school year. As Principal 5 explained, her administrative relationship developed slowly as they both

went in during the summertime... to do the timetable and that kind of stuff. We probably spent a month every day together. We talked about family, talked about our careers, and why I wanted to get into administration. He talked about how he got into administration and what some of his plans were. Then you start to share some personal stuff about family. (P5-03)

Participants commented they were more successful at holding the attention of their principal during the summer, during the school day when staff was teaching, and at the end of the day when staff had left. During these times there were fewer people demanding the attention of the principal. Four of the participants stated the time they spent seeking out their principals to consult on decisions helped to develop both a personal and a professional relationship in the administrative team.

The second step participants took was to develop a feel for the principal's style of decision-making over the first months. Through closely observing how the principal interacted and resolved conflicts with the students, parents, and staff members, participants learned their superior's values and beliefs on various issues. A good example of this practice was provided by Principal 2:

I went in very quiet and just listened, listened, and listened. Then I came up with views a little later on in the process. Not late enough where I didn't have a say in the decision, but late enough where I saw where all the parties were coming from because I was new to the building. (P2-03)

This participant understood his responsibility as a vice-principal was to know the direction toward which the principal was trying to move the school, and to show support through suggestions that assisted the efforts of his principal.

Many of the participants discussed the responsibility of a vice-principal to know his/her principal's stance on issues. A second example was provided by Principal 7, who learned the principles of her supervisor as she "watched and saw the ways the principal dealt with people. Asked lots of questions; listened; followed her. Sat in on meetings, sat in on interviews with parents. I went where she went" (P7-14). Knowing the principal's philosophy and conducting themselves in a way that supported their principal's view was a major cultural learning all participants had to learn as new administrators.

The third step for participants was to maintain the image of a cohesive team with their principal. There are many situations, participants pointed out, that arise each day in schools that test the team cohesion of the administrative pairing. Principal 3 commented:

There is a natural tendency for kids and parents and teachers to try and play both of you against each other. The bond has to be strong, the commitment to each other, to know and to trust each other so that you are there supporting your principal. The principal/vice-principal relationship is the most important. (P3-08)

Understanding the principal's standards of practice was an important job for participants.

As vice-principals, they “wanted to do a good job so [they] put a lot of time and effort into reading situations, reading reactions, not mimicking responses but knowing the standards that [their principals] upheld, and backing them up” (P3–04). Participants also had to “decide whether or not to share some information with the principal since it can affect your working relationship... there are some staff issues that are just so menial it is not even worth repeating” (P5–03). Often Principal 3 and Principal 5, found individuals in the school would attempt to play one administrator against the other, or would use the vice-principal’s lack of knowledge on a specific subject to get what they wanted.

The participants understood an important goal was “to be united with the principal” (P2–09), and that the two administrators need to “be a team” (P9–05). The process of developing a relationship was “a two-way street” (P8–10), and as vice-principals they had to make “the time to talk with the principal” (P8–11). Each of the new principals interviewed demonstrated an understanding of these three steps that led to the development of a strong relationship with their principals.

At times as vice-principals, participants disagreed with their principals’ views or the way a particular issue was handled. During these times the ability of participants to maintain a supportive role behind their supervisor was tested. It was crucial for them to deal with these situations appropriately so that the participants did not undermine the principal’s authority within the school. They, as vice-principals, only communicated their opinions in private conversations with their principal, because they realized that the principal had the final decision on all matters. As subordinates, the participants were careful to voice their concerns in a thoughtful and deliberate fashion. As one of the senior

administrators, Principal 9, explained:

Hopefully the principal has taken into consideration the suggestions of the vice-principal when the decision is made, if the suggestions have been worthy. But once the door opens the principal has the final say, and sometimes young vice-principals have a hard time backing what the principal says, especially if they don't agree with it... So that is a skill the vice-principal has to work on. (P8-06)

Similarly the other two participants who were experienced administrators maintained that the vice-principal's role was to demonstrate commitment, loyalty, and support toward the principal. For these three individuals, they expected that all vice-principals would support and implement the decisions of their principal.

The worst action the participants could have taken as vice-principal was to openly discuss with staff members their displeasure with the principal's decision. Principal 4 described the challenge she faced to maintain the image of a team with the principal at her first administrative placement. During her first administrative pairing there was no team approach, the principal relegated her to the low-level tasks, and many staff members vented their frustrations concerning the principal on a daily basis. The challenge for Principal 4, however, was to demonstrate the cultural behaviour she knew was expected of her. She explained:

I really never had any conflict with my principal because I was very careful not to... politically I knew very well I must get along with the principal and support her decisions. We should have been a team, and we certainly were not a team because my principles and her principles were not the same. (P4-07)

This participant strongly believed that vice-principals who find themselves in a negative administrative pairing, such as the one described here, must demonstrate unwavering support for their principal to the staff, students, parents, and community at large.

The administrative cultural group expected the participants in this study, as vice-principals, to display loyalty and support toward their principal and to implement all decisions. To do otherwise would have put their future career advancement at risk. As one participant pointed out, some vice-principals have struggled to support their principal, and “it has ended some individuals’ administrative careers” (P3–08).

Joining the Administrative Group

When participants accepted their first administrative position, they were thrust into a new social group. They had to observe how administrators interacted with each other to learn the typical conduct that was acceptable within the group. Participants then had to socialize themselves into the administrative group by controlling their behaviour. The data indicated that they used various strategies to successfully navigate the political nature of the administrative group.

There was a learning process through which these new administrators progressed while learning the acceptable conduct at administrative meetings. Many of the participants reflected back on how they intentionally controlled their social interactions. This was done in several different ways, but all participants described how they were quiet and observant of social interactions. Principal 5 explained her approach:

My first two years I did not say a whole lot at meetings. I was there and I answered questions when they asked, but I sat and listened to what people said. I watched

how people spoke to one another, and I observed how they related to one another.

The types of things they spoke about at lunch time and how they spoke... I guess it taught me an etiquette of the types of things that you can speak about and the types of things that you don't. Who you can speak to and who you shouldn't speak to...

When you go for a beer afterward, that is where you learn a lot about the type of things to talk and not talk about. You learn by watching and listening to the conversation, and by what is talked about. (P5-11)

Similarly, Principal 7 provided an excellent insight into this process:

At my first regional meeting I did not say anything. I just watched and listened. I learned quickly to read whether or not the other people at the table, or my superintendent, would listen if you presented in a very mature way. You need to do your homework and have your facts. If you are going to present an issue, do not just bring something whining. Bring a solid issue with background facts, do your homework and present it in the right format. (P7-06)

Deliberately sitting back and limiting their active participation in the administrative group provided these participants the time to learn how to be accepted. They were then able to approach social events knowing the type of interactions that were accepted by the inner circle of influential administrators.

Participants quickly learned the various cliques and influential principals within the administrative group. In his interview, Principal 3 pointed out the administrative group could no longer be described by the term

the 'Old Boys Club'. It is too outdated a term. It still exists in a way. There are

people who are in, and there are people who aren't. I wouldn't necessarily say that there are people who are out, but there are people who are just not as in tune with the goings-on of the board. (P3-02)

This participant was clear that those administrators who were 'in' were very influential and were effective individuals to know for aspiring new administrators. However, in the interview with Principal 6, she warned that as a new administrator:

You need to slowly work your way in, and you have to be careful where you work your way in. There are distinct groups within our association too. I think that is why I was always careful where I sat. Who sat where, and what you did. Some of the principals are people who I can't even sit at a table with during a meeting. I'll be polite and professional, but I don't like how they represent themselves as principals. (P6-17)

As was shown by these two administrators, the participants had to be selective while choosing the experienced administrators with whom to associate at functions. Four of the participants stressed that their circle of administrators played a significant role in learning the culture of administration. They believed that the friendships some vice-principals made with certain influential principals helped them move more quickly than others into the inner circle of the administrative social group.

The senior administrators interviewed also acknowledged the need for new administrators to be cognizant of their social behaviour during administrative meetings or gatherings. After interviewing the third senior administrator, a general rule seemed to emerge for all administrative candidates: *Be seen, not heard*. Asking too many questions,

or stating their opinion too often can have negative effects on new administrators. As Principal 8, a senior administrator, noted:

There is very little dialogue that goes on at the [the board's elementary school principals' association meeting]; there is more so at the regional meetings. There are many vice-principals who are on committees, and they make reports regularly. But young vice-principals don't want to ask too many questions or ask a question that may make themselves sound stupid. Vice-principals are probably better to ask their principal before or after the meeting if they have a question instead of baring their souls during the meeting, and being looked upon as stupid. (P8-02)

New administrators must manage their social interactions to avoid looking as if they are outsiders.

Principal 7 provided an excellent explanation for the political nature of administrative meetings. She rarely spoke at administrative meetings since

you want people to listen to you. You do not want them to tune out... Your credibility is important. How you do your job makes a difference. The last thing you want to do is bring an issue to the table that makes you look like a total dork. You have to know what you are doing. Lots of people rely on you to know what you are doing. (P7-09)

Unfortunately, Principal 7 explained, not all new administrators understood the need to project the image of being capable. She commented there were several administrative meetings where many of the more seasoned administrators became aggravated by 'uneducated' or 'uninformed' questions posed by inexperienced administrators. It became

“evident that they are quite green about the process” (P7–08).

Achieving Group Membership

The large turnover in administrators this board experienced precipitated many younger individuals to be appointed to administrative positions. All 10 participants discussed how the issue of teaching experience influenced the acceptance of new administrators, and how some new administrators struggled to be accepted by the administrative group.

Both senior administrators, Principal 8 and Principal 9, commented that many of their colleagues questioned whether these young administrators had the maturity and experience to perform their new roles. Both participants stated that administrators should have taught for 10 to 15 years, and should have had a variety of experiences within the school system. Principal 8 gave this justification:

There is something to be said for principals who have had a long and extensive teaching career. The more experience you have in the classroom, the better prepared you are for administration. Young people are at a disadvantage... it is important to have experienced a different clientele, a different community, different parents, and that gives you a broader sense of how to deal with things.
(P9–03)

Similarly, Principal 9 commented:

Right now we’ve got teachers who have taught for 5 years. As soon as their 5 years of teaching is up, they are into administration. It is important as an administrator to have had experience in varying divisions and special education. If you are going to

get there in 5 years, the big thing is you are not going to have enough teaching experience. (P9–01)

Both of the senior principals in this study struggled with the trend of teachers entering administration in their late 20s or early 30s. They also commented that many of their colleagues held similar views that administrators needed to have a teaching career much greater than 5 years with a variety of experiences, should not have a young family, and should have achieved several life milestones to bring into their administrative role.

Five participants in this study were among the young administrative appointments during this time period. They experienced the sentiment that younger administrators did not belong in their new positions, and found it challenging to be accepted by the older administrators. These young administrators also strongly voiced their displeasure of how they were treated by some of the veteran principals. Principal 6 commented that the

veteran principals really resented the quick turn-around. There was a group of us who were very young, vice-principals like myself, who were promoted to a principalship. I just had 5 years' experience and three of them were L.T.O.s, and that was appalling to them. (P6–05)

Principal 6 found administrative meetings or gatherings to be “very intimidating; the senior administrators knew each other and they would stare, for a lack of a better word, because you were the outsider” (P6–16). She commented later in the interview that

older administrators really do think that they can have an opinion on whether or not you are ready for the job. It has nothing to do with how many committees you have been on. It has nothing to do with how great you are in the classroom. It has to do

with what their experience was and how they got to be an administrator. (P6–06)

For each of the younger administrators interviewed, this belief held by some senior administrators was challenging to deal with on a daily basis. It created an unwelcoming environment for this group of young administrators and limited their desire to approach some senior administrators for guidance early on in their careers. This sentiment of senior administrators was commented to the younger principals repeatedly, as Principal 6 observed:

It is said in a few ways. One, it's just said in a rude way, just to be ignorant, and then it is also said [as] a message that is coming through when they are going again to support young people moving up through the ranks. It is even said to the young men, "Well, you have a young family. You couldn't possibly do this job now."

(P6–05)

These administrators were frustrated by the mind-set of some older administrators and struggled with the belief that a person's personal life needed to be considered as a qualifier for administration.

Several participants commented that the perceptions of younger administrators had begun to change. For example, both of the senior principals had some reservations at first about the speed at which individuals were acquiring administrative positions. However, they both believed there were 'young stars' who were able to effectively assume an administrative role even though they had limited experience, as seen in this comment by Principal 9:

It depends. There are some real go-getters, and sometimes the go-getters are very

competent. As competent a principal as we have. I will use MW as an example. He is one of the youngest principals we have, but he is bright, well read, knowledgeable, and MW has gotten to the point now where he is extremely respected. He is going to be one of the next superintendents, no doubt, and worthy, very, very worthy of it. But he has worked extremely hard to get to where he is. When he speaks, people listen. There are other people who speak and don't make sense, don't know what they are talking about. They don't have any influence.

(P9-02)

Principal 1 also acknowledged that perceptions among senior administrators had slowly begun to change:

The nay-sayers were vocal because of a perceived lack of experience. I am of the old adage that there is no substitute for experience. However, if people are willing to work together, work hard, trust one another, get all the facts and information, and do a good job, then that will make up for quite a bit of the supposed lowering of the bar. People have realized that just because you are not necessarily mature in age as others does not mean you can't do a good job. That was a concern when this turnover initially started. I think that has since quelled, and very quickly. (P1-05)

The young administrators who were effectively performing their administrative duties silenced some of the early criticism from older colleagues. However, there was still the concern expressed by Principal 9 of how these young individuals were going to cope with the demands of their administrative role, while remaining current and fresh. The senior administrators in this study were still concerned about how the next 10 years would

unfold.

Through interviewing the five younger principals, it became evident these individuals had created their own smaller social circle within the administrative group. They formed a distinct cohort and progressed together through the learning process of becoming an elementary school principal. They also played influential roles in each other's development. This fact emerged during the interview with Principal 2.

I do think that the newer administrators have a tight bond. A lot of us are around the same age so it builds that bond. We have been doing it now for 5 years. We have been through professional things, personal things, and it helps to build that bond. (P2-12)

The idea of a distinct social group within the administrative group also emerged from Principal 5, who saw a difference between the new administrators and the older style of administrators.

We are different. I don't know what it is; maybe it's just that we didn't have to work as hard to get there. We just don't seem to wear the big principal badge like others do, and they do tend to be the people with more experience. (P5-11)

Principal 3 also saw a difference between the new and older administrators.

There is a lot of creativity that comes with the 'young guns'; I think there are a lot of really good people skills that are coming in with us. I do know there are a lot of mistakes that I make because I didn't have as much grounding in one area or another as I might have to solve the problem that I had at hand. (P3-14)

The younger administrators responded to the negative sentiment by establishing their own

social network within the administrative group. Interestingly, given the number of individuals within this sub-group, these individuals will most likely be the influential leaders within this board and will determine the criteria for group membership.

Summary of Cultural Learning

The ability of participants to learn the accepted rules of the administrative world affected their success as new administrators during their role learning. Some administrators were able to more quickly learn their social place within the group, while others seemed to struggle and were never able to achieve the same degree of success as their colleagues. The superintendent interviewed explained the success administrators experienced during their role learning this way:

It is their basic skill set that becomes involved; they are faster learners, they have a bigger perspective... they can roll with the punches, they have that maturity. It is just the nature; some people are brighter, swifter, more flexible, quicker studies than others. That applies to teachers, caretakers, lawyers, and administrators.

(P10-06)

Similar to all social groups, there were accepted rules that participants in this study had to recognize and follow to be accepted by others in the administrative group. The challenge for these new administrators interviewed was the lack of a rule book for them to read and learn the rules they were to play by in their new role.

Organizational Profile

The last theme identified in the data was the ability of administrative candidates to build a *profile* within their board. An individual's profile is defined by the views others in

the school board hold toward that person's worth to the educational system, and is influenced by the quality of work the person does on a daily basis, the type of interpersonal skills the individual uses, and the perceived leadership ability of the individual. The administrators interviewed acknowledged that developing a positive profile was a key factor in successfully being promoted from teacher to vice-principal, and then to principal.

Three major aspects can describe the nature of profile development within a school board. The first part of profile development is an individual's involvement within their school board. The second part of profile development is a positive reputation within the board. Third, individuals pursuing administrative positions must achieve the endorsement of several senior administrators.

Board Involvement

As participants pursued a promotion to either a vice-principalship or a principalship, they actively sought out opportunities to participate in leadership roles. To expand their profiles, they assumed additional leadership responsibilities in their school, at the system level through various initiatives, and on board committees. However, the challenge for these individuals was to find the right type of activities that provided opportunities to be noticed by senior board officials.

All the participants discussed the importance of finding opportunities to take on leadership roles to expand their profiles. Principal 5 explained it this way:

To get into administration you want to have a little part of everything. You want to have a part of curriculum, part of serving on a committee, a part of doing some stuff in the school with kids. They want to see a well-balanced, interpersonal

communicative person with integrity and character. (P5–12)

Participants benefited from having a variety of leadership experiences instead of specializing in one area. The board wanted participants to have knowledge on a variety of topics to prepare for their future roles as principals where each day they would be confronted by a variety of issues. For this reason, four of the participants strategically designed their experiences to enhance their roundedness and more effectively present themselves at selection time.

The quality of work individuals produced greatly influenced their profile development. Principal 3 explained that senior administrators were constantly watching new initiatives or projects to identify individuals who emulated the desired leadership characteristics of administrators. He explained that the manner in which individuals investigated and ultimately resolved conflicts with students, parents, or staff members significantly influenced their future opportunities to participate in other leadership activities. Principal 1 reflected on his experience, and commented:

If you're able to handle those other things, are able to demonstrate, then you are going to get more on your plate. Busy people get busier, but in the same sense if you are able to demonstrate that you can do it, then it's a win-win for everybody.

(P1–03)

An initial opportunity was provided for this principal to participate on a board initiative. His successful performance created the base from which further leadership opportunities were offered to him, which ultimately led to the development of his profile within this board of education. A similar pattern occurred for many of the other participants in the

study.

Participants also needed to be strategic in the selection of the additional responsibilities they assumed. They wanted to find activities that gave the greatest return for the energy they put into the tasks. Principal 6 commented on this notion.

All committees are important, but some are more important and high profile than others. Some committees are a ton of work and don't give you a great deal of recognition. Really, if you are trying to build yourself over a two-year plan, then you need to get involved in activities that will bring recognition to you. (P6-03)

All participants were selective in their additional commitments. As two of the principals commented, it was a waste of time to invest a significant amount of energy into tasks that did not develop their profile.

Another reason participants were selective was that they had watched some vice-principals become involved in as many projects as possible. This was not the best approach to take, as these individuals were often unable to make significant contributions to any one initiative. Principal 3 described his observations of some administrative candidates this way:

There is a definite feeling or understanding that when you're a vice-principal you have to sign up for all these committees. Again, I think that has worked against some people. They've been on so many things that they couldn't really give an effort into any of them. It is a matter of making sure that, whatever you do, you do it well. (P3-09)

The only accomplishment such individuals experienced, participants observed, was

overloading of themselves. This often significantly decreased their effectiveness overall since they were unable to produce a solid performance in any part of their administrative role, which negatively affected their profile development.

The Influence of Reputation

The second aspect of profile identified in this analysis was how a participant's reputation affected his/her success as a new administrator. There was strong evidence to indicate that the ways in which participants handled themselves during leadership opportunities greatly influenced their reputation within their school board.

A benefit of becoming involved with initiatives at the board level was that it provided participants the opportunity to be exposed to other experienced principals and superintendents. The experience of Principal 5 was typical for all participants.

Committee work has really allowed me to develop relationships with superintendents as well. They get to know you as a person; they get to know you and how you make decisions. You know pretty quickly whether they value you or not. They will never tell you, but it is an unspoken manner or body language.

(P5–12)

A more natural setting to interact with senior administration occurred for participants during regional or board projects, which also allowed them to demonstrate their leadership abilities in a real context. Committee work also allowed the superintendents and the senior principals to develop an understanding of their interpersonal skills and to see how they worked with others.

First impressions were also important for participants. Their early performances on

specific tasks influenced the development of their reputation and affected future opportunities to participate in board-level initiatives. For example, Principal 3 was a part of the social committee for his region.

They needed me to run the Secretary's Day luncheon. By some very good choices to hold it at the top of the Queen's Tower, my colleagues were saying, "He can do things in style." It was a no-brainer, but it garnered me a reputation and you never know what is or isn't going to do it for you in terms of building a positive reputation. (P3-04)

Participants observed more than once that they never knew when others were watching and making judgements on their performance. For this reason they were selective in the responsibilities they took on or the comments they made during meetings.

The reputation administrators created for themselves greatly influenced their perceived worth. It became clear that the participants' reputation developed from the subjective views others in the organization held of them. Several participants noted that an individual either has it or does not have it. Principal 7's comments were representative of the group.

I think you have got it or you do not. That is an awkward thing to say that it was not hard for me. Part of it is the passion for the kids, and part of it is the passion for the profession, a passion for what is right, a passion for carrying themselves with a kind of respect and dignity that you want to give everybody and to receive. All of that bundled together is integrity. They either have it or they do not. They demonstrate it, and it is either there or it isn't. (P7-15)

During the selection procedure for administration, this reputation became an important facet, as Principal 5 stated:

They say your reputation precedes you. The first one would be your personality, and you can read a person's personality. It is either there or it's not; you either click with people or you don't. So that is the first part. The second part would be what you are doing in your school, and word travels very fast. Your staff either like you or they don't, or some like you and some don't... The type of personality you are bringing across to your staff and the way you're dealing with those people on a one-to-one basis as a colleague will determine your reputation, and how your reputation is filtered through the system. (P5-11)

The reputation senior board administrators held of participants was crucial during the selection process. Participants observed that some aspiring administrative candidates had all the necessary qualifications and had a well-rounded resume, but were not successful during selection because of the reputation they had developed. This image or reputation developed during administrative training greatly affected profile development and later influenced the success experienced during the selection process for a vice-principalship and principalship.

The Power of Endorsement

The process of becoming *endorsed* as an administrative candidate as he/she pursued the vice-principalship was a highly political process for each of the participants. Each participant in this study had been supported in his/her application by several senior administrators, but other candidates in the board who lacked sufficient backing were

unsuccessful in achieving a promotion. Several factors influenced the degree to which participants were endorsed by senior administration.

Each participant had senior administrators take an active interest in their development. They were assisted by their principal and superintendent by having their names put forward for leadership opportunities. Principal 5 shared her experience.

An experienced principal took myself and two other females under her wing. She saw us as being good candidates and wanted to endorse us. We worked with her for about 2 years doing different professional development, getting together for sessions and talking about different things that were related to the principal program. (P5–12)

Similarly, other participants had principals who took on an active role in preparing and promoting them. Participants commented that this was also being in the right place, at the right time. There were other individuals within the board who were just as capable but whose principal either did not promote individuals as much, or were not as influential as some of the highly regarded “power principals” (P6–07).

The proximity an individual worked in relation to the board office also played a factor in getting endorsed. An interesting observation was made by Principal 3, regarding his ability to be recognized as a leadership candidate.

I was out in [the country]... I was too out of the way. I had been doing things, and I had been doing lots and lots on the provincial scale, but when it came right down to a local level a lot of the superintendents didn't know who I was. (P3–02)

This participant was transferred to another school that was closer to the board office. He was then able to connect with other senior members of the board to develop key

relationships he needed to be endorsed for promotion. He concluded that being geographically closer to the board office provided a greater opportunity for superintendents to interact with him on a more regular basis.

The final endorsement participants received during the application process was from superintendents who knew them. As Principal 1 explained:

You know where you stand with the leadership assessment document. It is the 20% of the supervisory officer input that is the unknown. There is no way of knowing how you did because you weren't there and you don't get feedback on it. There is nothing articulated so you don't know, so I guess that is where the discomfort comes in. (P1-15)

Each of the participants had superintendents endorse their application for further advancement into either a vice-principalship or a principalship. Without this endorsement, they believed that they would have never been granted an interview. The influence of the sponsor had a significant weight, as Principal 3 noted.

Individuals who were promoted by the people around them actually got that opportunity before others of us who weren't as well known. There were political games, political circumstances that happened. That people knew them better has helped some individuals and hindered others. The reputation of those that promote you is a very important thing when it comes to your application for leadership. (P3-02)

This participant believed that certain people were better than others at promoting their people. He contended that being in a higher profile school, having a strong principal

advocate, and being geographically close to the board office were effective ways to build a profile and to achieve an endorsement for promotion.

The superintendent's explanation of how the supervisory input and interview selection process worked provided an interesting comparison to the views expressed by the other participants. He indicated that this part of the selection process "allows other players to become involved since people know the applicant in different settings... the idea is to get another perspective" (P10-10). The superintendent said that the supervisory officers organized applicants into three categories: "superstars, needs more experience, and we just don't see it." Those applicants grouped in the first two categories all were granted interviews. From there, an applicant's interview determined their success.

So much of being an administrator involves people skills and how you come across and how you communicate. The trustees are the ultimate bosses. They don't want their phone to ring. If you come across as a kind of person as having rapport and empathy that counts for them big time. (P10-11)

Successful achievement of an administrative appointment was a complex process.

Participants held a strong belief that who they knew and what they did within the board greatly influenced their success. The superintendent also demonstrated the importance of applicants having individuals to endorse their promotion. However, the superintendent placed an emphasis on an applicant's interpersonal skills as a significant factor during the selection process.

Summary

Four themes were identified during the analysis of the role learning experienced by participants during their training and selection process to become elementary school principals. The first theme dealt with the shift in their organizational perspective from that of a teacher to that of an administrator. The second theme involved the development of the necessary skills through the use of organizational and individual strategies. The third theme explored how participants learned the administrative cultural world. The fourth theme described how participants developed and promoted their profile to successfully achieve a promotion to an administrative position.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

This study examined the role learning participants experienced during their training and socialization as elementary administrators in a southern Ontario school board. This study grew out of a continuous dialogue this researcher overheard coming from teachers, school administrators, university professors, and even statements embedded in literature concerning the poorly understood dynamics of successfully becoming a principal. Many statements concerned the lack of proper training provided to administrators and the political nature of being successfully promoted.

The context of education in Ontario during the first decade of the new millennium has seen a large turnover in administrators, which caused boards to struggle to find qualified applicants. Williams' (2001) survey of Ontario administrators found that 46.9% of administrators expect to retire by 2005, and 70.4% by 2009. This large turnover in administrators has produced a shortage of qualified teachers who are interested in applying for and capable of being promoted to an administrative position. Boards have had to rely on temporary Letters of Permission from the Ontario College of Teachers to place unqualified teachers into administrative positions to fill vacancies. Complicating the issue is that there has been a lack of research to help boards of education understand the socialization process as a method to effectively facilitate administrator development. Boards need better knowledge to develop strategies that can maximize administrator training programs.

A review of the literature confirmed the lack of research regarding the socialization and training of individuals into educational administration. Much of the research on becoming a principal has focussed on changes within individual administrators (Daresh,

1987; Macmillian, 1994). Relevant research on the socialization process has primarily concentrated on the experiences of newcomers to organizations (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Griffin, Colella, & Goparaju, 2000; Jones, 1986; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979), and few have addressed the socialization tactics involved with promotion (Greenfield, 1975). Consequently, there was a need for research to investigate the socialization processes that occur within boards of education to dispel assumptions made by both practitioners and academics. These reasons provided the motivation to investigate the socialization and training of elementary school principals.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate the socialization and training individuals experience during their transition from a teacher to an elementary school principal. Five questions were addressed to study the socialization and training process participants experienced during their role learning.

1. How does an individual's perspective change during the transition from a teacher to an elementary school principal?
2. What organizational training strategies are employed by the board of education to assist the role learning of administrative candidates?
3. What individual training strategies do administrative candidates use to help themselves learn their new role?
4. How does the culture of the administrative group affect the socialization and training of administrator candidates?
5. How do individuals develop their profile within the board before applying

to an administrative position?

A qualitative methodology using grounded theory was used since the socialization and training of administrators is a phenomenon that has a complex set of interactions that are poorly understood (Creswell, 2002). Participants holding different administrative positions in the board were selected to provide a variety of perspectives regarding administrator selection and training to accurately portray their sense making of the socialization process (Smircich, 1983). Seven of the participants were new elementary school principals with less than 5 years of experience in their current position. Two participants were experienced elementary school principals with over 10 years experience, and the final participant was a male superintendent. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and verified by participants for accuracy. Transcriptions were then analysed through an inductive approach into coded segments that were reduced to themes. Cross comparison of participant themes allowed the data to be organized into four categories. Validation of results was carried out through member checking (Creswell, 2002) by two participants to verify the overall analysis was accurate. Participants' input and suggestions were incorporated into the final analysis of this study.

Constant comparisons of participants' experiences helped to clarify the process of administrator role learning during socialization and training into four categories.

Perspective shift was the first process identified and was characterized by a change in each participant's views of teachers, the feeling of isolation, and a broader understanding of educational issues. The second process focussed on the *development strategies* used by senior board personnel to train new administrators, referred to as *organizational training*

strategies, and the strategies used by participants to facilitate their own learning, referred to as *individual training strategies*. The third socialization process was learning the culture (values, practices, and assumptions) of the *administrative world* to better understand their relationships with other administrators and to be accepted into the administrative group. The last process participants experienced was the development of their *organizational profile* through sitting on standing administrative committees, implementing curriculum based initiatives, and developing teacher resources. Such targeted board-level involvement yielded a positive reputation and garnered sponsorship for endorsement from a number of senior administrators.

Discussion of Results

The role transition from a teacher to a principal causes individuals to experience significant shifts in perspective, as a result of what Louis (2001) describes as contrasts between old roles and new roles within an organization. Over time, aspiring administrators' perspectives of education evolve by developing a more global perspective of the educational system, expanding their perspective of teachers, and assuming a leader's perspective. An example of a shift in perspective participants experienced was the shock associated with the neediness of some teachers, causing them to realize that not all teachers were highly motivated, independent, and effective problem-solvers like themselves. According to Louis, this surprise helps new administrators to adapt to their new role, change their mental schemas, and in the process assume a new professional identity. Greenfield (1975) and Macmillian (1994) have also found that new administrators experience significant perspective changes in a number of areas, including their

relationships with former colleagues and the formation of new professional identities.

Many of the participants in this study did not anticipate how much their views of teachers would change. The surprise encountered by participants in this study highlights the need for new administrators to become more aware of how their relationships with teachers will change as a result of being a part of the administrative cadre.

Another challenge participants experienced during role learning was socializing themselves to the administrative cultural world during the first several months of being a vice-principal. Similar to other social groups described by Van Maanen and Schein (1979), the administrative cultural group holds new administrators on the periphery of social interactions for a period of time until they are accepted and allowed to move along the inclusionary boundary of the group. Participants experienced a period of time where they did not feel a part of either the teacher or administrator cultural groups, which fostered a sense of isolation during the first several months in their new roles. This result suggests that established members of the administrative group may not openly accept new administrators, particularly if they are young or in some way different from established members of the group. The participants in this study were told by bold and subtle messages that new administrators need to learn their place, which held them to the outer edges of the inclusionary boundary and exacerbated their sense of isolation while struggling to gain acceptance as role incumbents. This experience is similar to the developmental experiences of junior executives reported by Whyte (1956), where individuals rising along an organization's hierarchical boundary are treated differently by both their former peers and new colleagues. This differentiated treatment from established

group members caused many of the participants to develop their own social network, and is similar to Kanter's (1977) finding that managers who are excluded from camaraderie with the cultural group form their own circle of influence.

Goffman's (1959) work on self-presentation provides an excellent framework to understand how new administrators gain acceptance into the administrative cultural world. Goffman contends that self-presentation is enhanced by an awareness of the cultural rules at play in the new social context. One of the important cultural rules the participants in this study had to recognize was the clear line that separates teachers from administrators. This rule expected new administrators to maintain a professional distance from the social interactions of staff members so that situations that may be considered unprofessional were avoided. New administrators who struggle with their identity shift or who are struggling with the isolation of their new position at times may not see this line of separation and participate in behaviour that is considered questionable among established administrators.

A second aspect of self-presentation is the use of opinion conformity described by Appelbaum and Hughes (1998), which is the expectation that new administrators will accept the norms of and beliefs of the established members of the group. This type of self-presentation was evident among the participants in this study. At administrative meetings they rarely spoke unless making a report back on the progress of a committee on which they served. As new administrators, participants also seldom asked questions at regional and district meetings to avoid giving the impression they were 'green' or uninformed. They often waited to ask their principal or other colleagues to provide

clarification at the conclusion of these meetings. Another significant cultural rule at meetings was never to challenge the position of experienced administrators as this was seen as insubordination and unacceptable. Even when participants knew they were right, they employed opinion conformity to avoid conflict. Administrators who do not manage their self-presentation are likely to experience consequences that are detrimental to their career advancement.

Senior officials of the school board in this study had created formal organizational socialization strategies and training opportunities to alleviate some of the role strain associated with the transition to administration. New administrators regularly met in workshops to learn the technical skills of their new role and participated in leadership development groups organized by several superintendents as a strategy to reinforce the attitudes, values, and beliefs of the administrative cultural world. The variety of workshops and in-services offered to new administrators demonstrated an institutionalized socialization orientation that has been described by Van Maanen and Schein (1979) as using collective and informal training strategies to foster a collective sense of identity and loyalty to the administrative group. However, the collective socialization used by the school board in this study did not induce a custodial role orientation as would be predicted by the works of Jones (1986) and Van Maanen and Schein (1979), which suggests that such an orientation emerges by proscriptively communicating to new administrators expected conduct. Instead, these sessions stressed a systematic and logical process of problem solving as a means for administrators to collect information, receive input from concerned parties, and then to make decisions on the known facts. Participants repeatedly

communicated that the board's formal training programs effectively addressed the technical skills necessary to perform their administrative duties. This result is in stark contrast to the findings reported by Daresh (1987) and Greenfield (1975) that administrative training programs ineffectively assisted the development of administrators. These learning opportunities focussed on necessary technical knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and allowed participants to be content innovators by improving their strategic practices as school administrators.

One of the most compelling results of the study was the profound degree to which principals of aspiring administrators influence the socialization of their subordinates. To a large extent, the beliefs and practices of the school principal determine the socialization orientation that teachers and vice-principals will experience during role learning based on their beliefs and practices. In fact, principals often can have a greater influence on the development of new administrators than any of the formalized programs at the board level. Table 1 draws upon the work of Van Maanen and Schein (1979) and Jones (1986) to demonstrate two different socialization orientations. Van Maanen and Schein categorized strategies as falling within individualized versus institutionalized approaches, Jones refined these two broad categories by clustering the strategies in relation to context, content, and social aspects. This study shows that ineffective mentoring leaves aspiring administrators to their own devices, which is typically found in an individualized socialization orientation. By contrast, effective mentoring is fostered with an institutionalized role learning orientation by principals who are supportive of their

Table 1:

Socialization Strategies

Category of Socialization	Individualized	Institutionalized
Context	individual	collective
	informal	formal
Content	random	sequential
	variable	fixed
Social Aspects	disjunctive	serial
	disvestiture	investiture/disvestiture

(based on Van Maanen & Schein, 1979 and Jones, 1986)

developing leaders. These strategies are evidenced by principals who provide release time for their vice-principals to attend professional development activities, who take on a mentorship role with their developing leaders, and who groom these individuals as their protégés.

Johnson and Ridley (2004) state these types of mentoring relationships have a positive effect on role learning. An open and supportive relationship in administrative teams provides vice-principals with continuous dialogue to facilitate self-reflection, to guide future development, and to become actively involved in the decision-making process for their schools. These opportunities range from designing the school timetable to structuring the school budget to being given direct supervision of specific staff members. This career mentoring according to McManus and Russell (1999), specifically enhances technical skill development and fosters acceptance of individuals into the social group. Furthermore, according to Ashforth and Saks (1996), it offers acceptance into a group and a positive role identity, which improves work performance, reduces stress, and increases job satisfaction. Principals who use their positional power to foster an open and collaborative environment in the administrative team maximize the institutional orientation of socialization characterized by Jones (1986) as use of collective, informal, sequential, variable, serial, investiture and divestiture socialization tactics.

By contrast, ineffective or negative administrative teams result from principals who provide little support or dialogue. Often these principals are reluctant to release their vice-principals or lead teachers to attend workshops or seminars. In this way, a clear message is communicated to aspiring administrators that their role is to remain in the

school and to complete the tasks they were assigned by the principal. Ineffective administrative pairings also have poor communicative relationships, and these principals tend to be highly critical of their vice-principal's performance, which has a negative influence on the subordinate's desire to take risks during role learning. The worst administrative pairings result in developing leaders being denied the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process, which can lead to the degradation of vice-principals' self-confidence and which can foster disenchantment. Participants who had been exposed to this type of administrative pairing explained that they learned very little from these experiences. Ashforth and Saks (1996) have reported that this type of role learning can permanently establish a negative developmental path for the individual because it increases stress, role confusion, and job dissatisfaction. According to Jones (1986), negative role learning comes from administrative relationships where the principal uses individual, informal, sequential, variable, disjunctive (limited role models), and disvestiture (discredit personal qualities) socialization tactics, which fosters an individualized orientation.

Another significant socialization force comes indirectly from other senior administrators who become role models to aspiring administrators by encouraging specific qualities and highlighting areas needing further development. These relationships also provide significant support and guidance for developing administrators in solving dilemmas, and they provide more role models for new administrators to emulate. This is similar to the type of relationships junior executives build with senior executives, as reported by Kanter (1977) and Whyte (1956). The new administrators in the current study

relied on these informal relationships to discuss their difficulties and to be counselled in confidence concerning events occurring at their school. At other times when, as vice-principals, participants wanted to express their displeasure with the position taken by their principals, informal mentors were able to mitigate some of the shortcomings of role learners' principals and to offer advice on appropriate conduct. Van Maanen and Schien (1979) characterize these types of relationships as a serial socialization strategy that further supports an institutionalized role learning orientation. Johnson and Ridley (2004) contend that the emotional warmth provided by informal mentors enhances role learning experiences and effectively socializes individuals to their new cultural group.

Several studies have explored how the socialization orientation within an organization influences the role orientation that individuals will assume. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) have concluded that a socialization that relies on individual, informal, random, disjunctive, and investiture processes causes the development of an innovative role orientation. By contrast, a socialization process that is collective, sequential, variable, serial, and involves disinvestiture creates a custodial role orientation. Jones (1986) grouped Van Maanen and Schein's tactics into individualized socialization (individual, informal, random, disjunctive) leading to an innovative role orientation, and institutionalized socialization (collective, sequential, variable, and serial) leading to a custodial role orientation.

The findings of this study do not fully support either of these two studies. Instead of a linear development the participants' role orientation appeared to arise from a complex interplay of multi-variable factors that led to either custodial or innovative activities, as

presented in Table 2. Complexity was also increased as new administrators employed their own individual socialization tactics, and interacted with the board of education's training programs to more effectively learn their new role. Similar to the strategies identified by Griffin, Colella, and Goparaju (2000), each participant in the current study displayed complex individual socialization strategies. The findings of Ashforth and Saks (1996) also support the position taken here as they contend that the versatility of the "institutionalized socialization may carry potential to impart and reinforce norms of either ordinary or extraordinary innovativeness or performance" (p. 171). In essence, the socialization strategies employed by members of the board interact with the personality of the role learner and the self-socializing strategies these individuals use will determine the extent to which a custodial role or an innovative role orientation will develop.

According to Greenfield (1975), administrators who adopt an innovative role orientation have more assertive personalities, possess well developed interpersonal skills, and have an internal locus of control. Innovative role learners are also able to effectively use individual socialization strategies to develop self-improvement plans, build positive relationships, and expand their network of colleagues. These are deliberate acts employed by these individuals to prepare themselves as an administrator. These administrators make the most out of each situation and create their own learning environment. Their innovative role orientation increases their influence and board profile.

Administrators who adopt a custodial role orientation have more complacent personalities, display an external locus of control, are passive, and use a limited number of proactive socialization strategies. Placement of new administrators in an ineffective

Table 2

Role Orientation During Administrative Role Learning

Criteria	Custodial Role	Innovative Role
locus of control	weak internal/external	strong internal
personality	complacent	assertive
proactive socialization strategies	limited use	extensive use
leadership style	transactional	transformational
relationship of administrative team	weak or neutral	positive
acceptance in administrative group	limited	welcomed
influence within board	limited	substantial
sponsorship by principal	limited	substantial

administrative team can also increase the likelihood of a custodial role adoption. The lack of confidence and role clarity that results for these individuals precipitates the use of a transactional leadership style culminating in the limiting of their power and influence within the school.

The results of this study imply that role orientation needs to be understood as a continuum between custodial and innovative role assumption. Varying degrees of custodianship or innovation depended on the context of the administrative placement and the personal attributes of administrative candidates. The more the new administrators used their self-reflective abilities to analyze the effectiveness of their actions and to set their own personal targets for improvement, the more influence they had on their personal career development, which led to a greater degree of role innovativeness. Ultimately, an administrator's success involves the ability to effectively perform administrative duties, regardless of the situation.

The results of this study also suggest that the influence principals have over their subordinates' career development continues as aspiring administrators work toward a hierarchical promotion. These individuals need leadership opportunities at the board level to develop their skills, broaden their educational experiences, and expand their network with other members of the board. These principals play a pivotal role by sponsoring their involvement in new initiatives. These opportunities outside of the school allow developing administrators to increase their capacity and reputation within their board of education. As they successfully demonstrate their abilities, they are presented with more new opportunities, and their autonomy from their principal begins to grow.

During their development, aspiring administrators who have been successfully promoted form many connections with established administrators. These relationships provide the aspiring administrators with guidance to develop professionally by taking necessary courses and with support to assume added leadership roles at the school and board level. Sponsorship by established members of the board plays an important role in this kind of advancement. These informal mentors (McManus & Russell, 1999) provide learning opportunities, access to information, and sponsorship for involvement in board initiatives, and their positional power assists subordinates in their development (Johnson and Ridley, 2004; Kanter, 1977).

The goal of this type of socializing is to prepare individuals for possible administrative roles. If new administrators can successfully demonstrate their abilities in the new roles, it aids in the development of a positive reputation and increases their influence and profile within the board. Slowly an individual's organizational profile is built through involvement in board level initiatives, such as being a member of a committee, leading a new initiative, or overseeing a special event. These opportunities are regularly used by aspiring administrators to demonstrate their abilities, to develop close working relationships with other administrators, and to become respected and known within the board.

However, not all mentors have the same degree of power and influence within the board. The power differential amongst established administrators allows certain principals to more effectively promote individuals around them than others. As a result, administrative candidates move more quickly through the development and training

process when they work under a powerful and influential principal. The participants in this study nicknamed these influential individuals within their board as “power principals” since these principals were more effective at exposing their protégés to other administrators, superintendents, and trustees. This exposure increased the aspiring administrator’s profile within the board.

The importance of working under an influential principal once again appears during the selection process for administrators. Participants repeatedly commented that the power principals in their board more effectively endorsed those under them for promotion than did other principals. Kanter (1977) and Whyte (1956) both define endorsement as the formal sponsorship of an individual by their superiors for a promotion within an organization. The endorsement of an applicant by a power principal appears to legitimize the readiness of an aspiring administrator.

In the school board under investigation in this study, the four components of the selection process are a resume, a leadership evaluation document, input from superintendents, and an interview by the selection committee. However, the critical component of the selection process is to obtain the endorsement of important stakeholders in the board. The leadership evaluation document is used by principals to gauge the readiness of their teacher or vice-principal for an administrative promotion, which forms the basis of the supervisory officer’s input. A strong endorsement by one of the board’s principals legitimizes the readiness of the applicant and conveys upon the applicant the credibility of the superior. It is an act of trust principals take when formally endorsing the readiness of their protégé because their reputation is at stake as well.

Participants in this study required a broad support base from both their principal and superintendent to substantiate their readiness for administration and for their application to be considered further. Those principals who held more influence within the board were more effective at endorsing those under them since they confer legitimacy (Brass, 2001; Kanter, 1979) to the applicant. The superintendent interviewed in this study confirmed that the classification of applicants was based on dialogue between principals and superintendents, which grouped applicants into one of three categories: superstars, not yet ready, or do not have what it takes to be an administrator. Those applicants who were grouped in the first two categories were considered as possible interview candidates. As the superintendent stressed, applicants must have excellent conflict resolution skills, be able to build relationships, and foster a positive school culture. Applicants who were not well known or who lacked a positive reputation within the board would not secure the endorsement of their superiors and were not granted an interview.

The final part of the endorsement process occurs during the formal selection interview. Aspiring administrators must sell themselves at the interview (Voros, 2002), which comes down to the applicant's interpersonal skills (Goffman, 1959; Whyte, 1956). The selection committee must be convinced of the applicant's ability to resolve conflicts, provide leadership, have a passion and commitment for the job, and look the part (Maxwell, 1998; Voros, 2002; Whyte, 1956). Only those who present themselves as effective interpersonal communicators capable of being effective problem-solvers will be successfully promoted.

Many questions still remain concerning the role that endorsement plays in the

selection process of administrators. There was uncertainty amongst participants about how senior members of the board determine who should be considered for promotion.

Participants believed that there was a significant amount of flexibility within the selection criteria, which enabled superiors to influence the outcome of the selection process.

Oftentimes those who were not successful were not specifically told the reasons for their failure, which created a feeling of uneasiness in participants since they had no control over the endorsement process. Further research is needed to understand the nature of endorsement and how it influences selection within education.

Implications

The implications of this study are significant to the field of education. The findings presented in this study help to better understand the process of administrative role learning and have implications for educational theory, research, and practice.

Implications for Theory

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the socialization and training process that occurs within the educational system. The framework of factors influencing the role orientation of new administrators, innovative versus custodial role, is divergent from published results. Past research makes the assertion that the social component of socialization (Jones, 1986), specifically serial/investiture and disjunctive/disinvestiture tactics, determines the role orientation of role incumbents. This study positions role orientation using an interactionist perspective. The socialization orientation employed by an organization interacts with the attributions of the role learner to establish the role orientation individuals will assume in their new position. This finding shifts the theory

from a linear developmental trajectory to a complex set of interactive processes.

Implications for Research

Extensive research needs to be conducted into the socialization process that occurs during administrative promotions within education. First, studies investigating the causes of unsuccessful administrative candidacies is needed to understand the factors causing some new administrators to return to the classroom. Second, comments made by participants in this study suggest there is a gender difference in role learning experiences that could not be fully explained by the research data. Further work in this area is needed. Third, the mentorship process in an administrative team needs to be analyzed to establish an understanding of best practices that promote role learning. Fourth, research is needed to determine how an individual's attributions and leadership style influence either innovative or custodial role orientations.

Implications for Practice

Boards of education in Ontario must consider how best to structure the organizational development strategies used by established administrators to socialize and train new administrators. Specifically, boards need to appreciate the amount of influence and control principals exert through the application of their power. Greater care must be taken during the placement of vice-principals to ensure that the administrative pairings will provide successful learning opportunities during administrative role learning. Principals who are willing to share responsibilities, who are good communicators, and who wish to develop a collaborative relationship with their vice-principals are the individuals the participants in this study described as making the best mentors. This is a

recommendation that needs to be considered further, and is critical for Ontario school boards to implement to assist with the short training administrators now receive before assuming an elementary school principalship.

The learning process of an administrator must also be demystified for individuals pursuing administrative positions. Aspiring administrators would benefit from a greater awareness of the socialization and training process experienced during role learning. Particularly, these individuals need to understand the importance of using proactive socialization strategies to foster a strong relationship with their principals. An appropriate place for this knowledge to be delivered to aspiring administrators is during the Principals' Qualification Courses.

Conclusion

The results of this study provide evidence supporting the interactionist perspective between individuals and organizational socialization tactics as characterized by Griffin, Colella, and Goparaju (2000). During role learning new administrators employ pro-active socialization techniques to facilitate their role learning in conjunction with the training opportunities offered by their school board. The daily interactions new administrators experience imparts a variety of role knowledge, such as opportunities spanning the cultural rules of administration, acquiring a new organizational perspective, learning how to negotiate a greater organizational profile through the development of relationships, and obtaining the endorsement of established administrators for further promotion. The skillfulness of an individual to acquire the necessary administrative knowledge and to incorporate these standards of behaviour into practice is the underlying force behind the

role transition from teacher to elementary school principal.

The pairing of the administrative team is a central issue in the preparation of new leaders. Not all principals have the disposition to assume the role of mentor with a vice-principal, and there are some principals who should never be placed in a mentoring role. These ineffective administrative pairings are characterized by an inability to establish a supportive relationship between the principal and the vice-principal, which limits vice-principals' ability to take control over specific tasks, and prevents them from building their power and influence within the school building. The influence of principals on the development of aspiring administrators may also have long-term negative impacts on an individual's administrative career, and the quality of education in contemporary schools hangs in the balance.

The socialization and training of administrators must continue to be studied to better understand how to facilitate role learning. This needs to be coupled with reform of the current practices of administrator training to create systems of socialization that help administrators develop innovative role orientations. Innovative administrators are desperately needed to confront the multitude of complex educational issues of the 21st century. Ignoring the needs of developing administrators is a waste of human capital, is morally reprehensible, develops ill-equipped administrators, and sets the stage for the failure of public education within Ontario. We must not let this happen.

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Appendix A

Principal Interview Questions

1. Please reflect back on your first year as a vice-principal. How was your new position different from being a teacher? What did you have to quickly learn on your own?

As a vice-principal, how did your relationship with staff, students and parents change?

During your vice-principalship, how many different principals did you work with? What assistance did these individuals provide in your development as an administrator?

2. How was your first year as a principal different from being a vice-principal? How are these two positions different?
3. This is a three part question. As you have moved from a teacher to a principal, what type of issues have presented you with the greatest challenges as an administrator? Why were these issues challenging? What surprises have you had as a new principal?
4. As you have learned your role as an administrator, what skills or knowledge have you needed to acquire on your own? How have you learned the skills or knowledge you were lacking? What specifically did you do? Who has provided you support?
5. Please explain how have you grown as an individual since entering administration.
6. Since leaving the classroom as a teacher, has your view as an educator changed? If it has, how so?
7. Please explain to me the training your board provided you as a new administrator. What type of skills or knowledge did this training help you develop? How are new administrators helped to assess and improve their performance?

In your opinion, which training strategies used by your board were the most effective to help you develop the skills and perspective necessary to be an elementary school principal?

What else could be done to help new administrators learn their new role as a vice-principal or principal?

8. What criteria does your board use during the selection process for administrators? In your opinion, what is your board looking for in administrators? What factors do you believe are the most important in determining who receives a promotion?
9. In your opinion, what determines the degree of success new administrators experience? What traits or characteristics do successful administrators possess?
10. When you look back at your learning experience as an administrator, what has allowed you to be successful? If you were to go through this learning process again, what would you do differently?

Superintendent Questions

1. Over the past five years the province of Ontario has experienced a large turnover in administrators. A study by Thomas Williams, from Queens University, shows that approximately 80% of elementary school principals in Ontario will retire between 2001 and 2009. What challenges and difficulties has this presented to the board? How is the board responding to this situation?
2. How does becoming an administrator change the relationships administrators have with teachers, parents, custodians and students? What is the biggest difference administrators experience from being a teacher to being an administrator? What type of issues typically surprise new vice-principals or principals?
3. All of the principals, I have interviewed, with less than 5 years experience indicate that the training the board provides is extensive and affective at giving the knowledge needed to be an administrator. Which training strategies do you believe are the most effective at training new administrators? Does the board have plans to change any aspect of the training process currently used to train vice-principals and principals in the near future?
What are the unique challenges elementary administrators face?
4. Some individuals seem to be able to adapt to their administrative position faster than other administrators. What do effective new administrators do to learn their role of as an elementary school vice-principal or principal? What struggles or limitations do less effective new administrators demonstrate? There have been several unsuccessful administrators that have returned to the classroom in our board. Are there similarities between these unsuccessful administrators?
5. As a new vice-principal, how important is the relationship with the principal? What role does the principal play in the development of the vice-principal? As a superintendent, what are your expectations of a principal who has a vice-principal in his/her school? Does N.E.P.A., or the board provide principals a guideline as to their role in the training process of new vice-principals?

6. I understand that the board has a three part process to select both vice-principals and principals. There is a leadership document worth 40%, an interview worth 40%, and input from superintendents worth 20%. Most individuals, I imagine, score fairly close to each other on the leadership document, if they have prepared themselves correctly for administration. Please describe to me the interview process, and input from superintendents in the selection process.

Appendix B

Information Letter

Title of Research: A Study of the Socialization and Learning Process New Elementary School Administrators Experience During the Transition from Teacher to Principal.

Researcher: Troy Wallace, Graduate Student troy.wallace@sympatico.ca
 Graduate Student, Brock University

Professor: Dr. Coral Mitchell cmitchel@ed.brocku.ca
 Faculty of Education, Brock University

Dear Participant:

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role learning of individuals during the training process of new elementary school administrators. It is a study that will examine the strategies used to help new administrators learn their new role during the transition from teacher to school principal.

Each participant will take part in an interview in order to acquire data for the project. The duration of the interview will be approximately 1 ½ hours. The following are some sample questions that will be used in the interview.

1. Please explain your experiences while learning your role as a vice-principal and principal. What changes have you experienced from being a teacher to being an administrator?

2. What type of training does the board provide to assist administrators during their transition from teacher to principal? What strategies work well for the board to assist individuals during this transition?

Potential benefits to your participation in this study will be that you will be given the opportunity to state your opinion on this issue and perhaps see changes within the selection and training process boards of education currently use as a direct result of your input. As well, you will gain the experience of participating in an interview. To my knowledge, participation in this study poses no risk to you whatsoever.

Your participation in this study will take approximately 1 ½ hours of your time. Participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time for any reason. There is no obligation to answer any question that you may consider to be invasive, offensive or inappropriate. All personal data will be kept strictly confidential and all information will be coded to protect your identity. Your name will not be connected with any published data and only the researcher and research advisor will have access to

the data. All data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and then shredded once the report is completed.

The Research Ethics Board of Brock University has officially approved this study. If you have any questions or concerns about your participation in the study, please contact myself or the Research Ethics Officer (905-688-5550, ext. 3035). Copies of the study's final report will be provided to participants upon request.

Sincerely,

Troy Wallace
(xxx-xxx-xxxx)

Appendix C

**Brock University, Department of Graduate & Undergraduate Studies in Education
Informed Consent Form**

Title of Study: A Study of the Socialization and Learning Process New Elementary School Administrators Experience During the Transition from Teacher to Principal.

Researcher: Troy Wallace troy.wallace@sympatico.ca

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Coral Mitchell cmitchel@ed.brocku.ca

Name of Participant: _____

I understand that this study in which I have agreed to participate will involve having an interviewer record our discussions using semi-structured questions regarding the topic of role learning during the selection and training of elementary administrators. I consent to having this conversation audio-recorded.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time for any reason without penalty. I also understand that there is no obligation to answer any questions that I consider invasive, offensive, or inappropriate. I understand that there will be no payment for my participation.

I understand that all personal data will be kept strictly confidential and that all information will be coded so that my name is not associated with my answers. I understand that only the researchers named above will have access to the data.

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____

This study has been approved by the Brock Research Ethics Board (File #)

If you have any questions or concerns about your participation in this study, you can contact Troy Wallace at (xxx-xxx-xxxx) or the Research Ethics Officer (905-688-5550, ext. 3035).

Feedback about the clarity of data collected will be available June, 2004 and provided to participants for verification. A copy of the final report will be provided to you upon request.

I have fully explained the procedures of this study to the above volunteer.

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D

Thank You Letter

Title of Research: **A Study of the Socialization and Learning Process New Elementary School Administrators Experience During the Transition from Teacher to Principal.**

Researcher: Troy Wallace, Graduate Student, (xxx)xxx-xxxx

Professor: Dr. Coral Mitchell, Faculty of Education, Brock University

Dear participant,

Thank you for your participation in this study. Your involvement in this study has provided me with valuable information to be used to explore the process of selection and training of elementary school administrators. When my research is completed, I will forward the research conclusions to all interested participants.

I would like to stress again that your confidentiality will be maintained. Your name will not be connected with any published data. Only my thesis advisor and I will have access to the data collected, and the data will be destroyed upon completion of my report.

If you would like a copy of the final report, please contact me (xxx-xxx-xxxx) and I will ensure you receive a copy.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Troy Wallace

Appendix E

Electronic Request for Research Participants

Title of Research: **A Study of the Socialization and Learning Process New Elementary School Administrators Experience During the Transition from Teacher to Principal.**

Attention: New Elementary school principals (1 to 5 years experience)

From: Troy Wallace, Graduate Student, Brock University
troy.wallace@sympatico.ca

I am seeking to find new principals (1 to 5 years experience) to participate in my Masters research thesis entitled- role learning during the selection and training process of new elementary school administrators.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role learning of individuals during the training process of new elementary school administrators. It is a study that will examine the strategies used to help new administrators learn their new role during the transition from teacher to school principal.

Each participant will take part in an interview in order to acquire data for the project. The duration of the interview will be approximately 1 ½ hours. The following is a sample questions that will be used in the interview:

Please explain your experiences while learning your role as a vice-principal and principal. What changes have you experienced from being a teacher to being an administrator?

Potential benefits to your participation in this study will be that you will be given the opportunity to state your opinion on this issue and perhaps see changes within the selection and training process boards of education currently use as a direct result of your input. As well, you will gain the experience of participating in an interview. To my knowledge, participation in this study poses no risk to you whatsoever.

The Research Ethics Board of Brock University has officially approved this study, and I have also been granted permission from your school board to carry out research within your board. Please contact me if you are interested in being a participant in this study.
Sincerely,

Troy Wallace



 Brock University

Senate Research Ethics Board

Extensions 3943/3035, Room AS 302

DATE: March 25, 2004**FROM:** Joe Engemann, Chair
Senate Research Ethics Board (REB)

 Chair
 Research Ethics Board
TO: Coral Mitchell, Education
Troy Wallace**FILE:** 03-302 Wallace**TITLE:** A Study Of The Role Learning During The Selection And Training Process Of New
Elementary School Administrators

 The Brock University Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above research proposal.
DECISION: Accepted as Clarified

This project has been approved for the period of **March 25, 2004** to **June 15, 2004** subject to full REB ratification at the Research Ethics Board's next scheduled meeting. The approval may be extended upon request. *The study may now proceed.*

Please note that the Research Ethics Board (REB) requires that you adhere to the protocol as last reviewed and approved by the REB. The Board must approve any modifications before they can be implemented. If you wish to modify your research project, please refer to www.BrockU.CA/researchservices/forms.html to complete the appropriate form **REB-03 (2001) Request for Clearance of a Revision or Modification to an Ongoing Application**.

Adverse or unexpected events must be reported to the REB as soon as possible with an indication of how these events affect, in the view of the Principal Investigator, the safety of the participants and the continuation of the protocol.

If research participants are in the care of a health facility, at a school, or other institution or community organization it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that the ethical guidelines and approvals of those facilities or institutions are obtained and filed with the REB prior to the initiation of any research protocols.

The Tri-Council Policy Statement requires that ongoing research be monitored. A Final Report is required for all projects, with the exception of undergraduate projects, upon completion of the project. Researchers with projects lasting more than one year are required to submit a Continuing Review Report annually. The Office of Research Services will contact you when this form **REB-02 (2001) Continuing Review/Final Report** is required.

Please quote your REB file number on all future correspondence.